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**Enslaved Women, Foodways, and Identity Formation: The Archaeology of
Habitation La Mahaudière, Guadeloupe, circa Late-18th Century to Mid-19th
Century**

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Habitation La Mahaudière, Guadeloupe, circa Late-18th Century to Mid-19th
Century**

by

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Dedication

I dedicate this work in memory of my mother, who first taught me about the love and power of food and to remember who you are.

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Enslaved Women, Foodways, and Identity Formation: The Archaeology of
Habitation La Mahaudière, Guadeloupe, circa Late-18th Century to Mid-19th
Century

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The most influential communities in modern Caribbean history have been the enslaved Africans and their descendant populations. As such, historical archaeology in the Caribbean has often focused on black lifeways under British, Dutch, and Spanish colonial powers. The utilization of various research strategies have included but not restricted to ethnoarchaeology, historical documents, material culture, oral history sources, settlement patterns, stable isotopic study, and burial practices. As one of the first historical faunal studies of the French Antilles, my work attempts to provide a contribution to the study of slave foodways. This dissertation examines the interrelationship between foodways and identity formation during the early modern French transatlantic expansion. My material evidence, exemplified via faunal remains, was retrieved from the slave village at Habitation La Mahaudière, once a prosperous sugar plantation in Guadeloupe established during the mid-18th century, whose domestic occupation spanned over 150 years and is currently a well-preserved archaeological site that

offers the potential for understanding diachronic social and cultural processes of the French plantation system. My zooarchaeological results in combination with primary and secondary sources that discuss colonial subsistence practices will assist in establishing how slave foodways and French Antillean identity is created by and shaped one another.

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Chapter I:

Introduction

Historical archaeology in the French Caribbean, although still in its infancy, presents intriguing avenues to understand France's role in the transatlantic expansion via plantation economies and the African response to slavery. This dissertation examines the interrelationship between foodways and identity formation in the French Antilles. My material evidence was retrieved from Habitation La Mahaudière, a prosperous sugar plantation in Guadeloupe established during the mid-18th century and occupied for over 150 years. In the context of the plantation economy for the French West Indies, La Mahaudière was a relatively large-scale plantation with well over 100 enslaved field laborers and on-site sugarworks (*sucrerie*) to process the sugar cane. Even after emancipation, the plantation continued on with free black laborers and several dozen indentured South Asian laborers. As a case study, La Mahaudière is a well-preserved archaeological site that offers the potential for understanding diachronic social and cultural processes of the French plantation system.

The most influential communities in modern Caribbean history were the enslaved Africans and their descendant populations. As such, historical archaeology in the Caribbean has often focused on black lifeways under British, Dutch, Spanish,

and now French colonial powers (Armstrong 1990; Gibson 2009; Haviser 1999; Kelly 2009; Kelly et al. 2008; Singleton 2005; Wilkie 2001; Wilkie and Farnsworth 1994, 1996). The utilization of various research strategies and forms of data have included, but are not restricted to, ethnoarchaeology, historical documents, material culture, oral history sources, settlement patterns, stable isotopic study, and burial practices (Armstrong 1990, 2001; Delle 1998; Handler 1996; Handler and Lange 1999; Haviser 1999; Klippel 2001; Pulsipher and Goodwin 2001; Wilkie 2001). My investigation will contribute to the existing scholarship by centering on the foodways of enslaved Africans in the French West Indies that, until now, has only been examined through historical documents (Debien 2000: 171-218; Du Tertre 1979; Hearn 1923; Labat 1931, 1970; Mandelblatt 2007, 2008; Moreau du Saint-Méry 1958; Munford vol. 3 1991; Satineau 1928; Tomich 1993).¹

Research Questions and Goals

Foodways is a metaphor for culture and a marker of identity denoting gender, class, status, ethnicity, or other kinds of socio-categorical differences. My research seeks to understand: *what is the relationship between foodways and identity?* The link between foodways and identity has been observed and theorized by social scientists for decades. It has been argued that a sense of identity and a connection to one's

¹ One exception is Tamara Varney (2003) who studied stable isotopes of bone and dental tissues from skeletons from the Sainte Marguerite Cemetery site on Guadeloupe to reconstruct the slave diet.

culture is shaped and re-shaped through ordinary, everyday activities. These actions are, in turn, influenced by culture and identity formation processes (Mennell et al.1992). The relationship between foodways and identity is evident in the promotion of various national and ethnic cuisines (e.g., Bower 2008; Brown and Mussell 1984; Counihan 1988; Counihan and Kaplan 1998; De Certeau 1984; Fischler 1988; Fine 1996; Goody 1982; Mennell 1985; Myszal 1996). Part of my multidisciplinary approach incorporates post-colonial French Antillean theories of identity and cultural formation as a step in the process of retracing how people of the past may have constructed and articulated their own identity. In particular, the recent movement in French identity politics towards the concept of *créolité* offers a theoretical framework by which I may explore how vernacular traditions, especially everyday practices, formulate a space for the individual along with the community to express culture and identity (Beoku-Betts 1995; Counihan 1988; Mennell 1985; Myszal 1996: 102; Murcott 1983; Probyn 1998). As such, in the case of La Mahaudière, how do foodways articulate an African Guadeloupean identity?

Furthermore, just as foodways may be a marker of identity, class, and status, gender is another manner of its social allocation. In the case of women, their relationship to food and eating is often constructed in an uncritical assumption of the division of labor, activity areas, and social dimensions of domestic food preparation and cooking (Counihan and Kaplan 1998; Gero 1992; Harbottle 2000:97-121; Kahn 1986; Kent 1998). My work follows the same theoretical vein as some prehistoric

and historical archaeology discourses, written from a feminist perspective, concerned with questions about women's status and gender-specific divisions of labor (e.g., Brumfiel 1991; Claassen 1991; Conkey and Spector 1984; Gilchrist 1999; Hastorf 1991; Nelson 1997; Scott 1991; Seifert 1994; Spector 1991; Wall 1994). To be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2, I integrate Afro-Caribbean and US black feminist theories with *créolité* into my analysis and interpretations to ascertain how the social dimensions of every day acts of subsistence practices may be central to the development of collective and individual identities.

In order to address the larger questions surrounding identity and culture, investigating the more mundane questions regarding the form and content of enslaved Africans' foodways is in order. Thus, a subset of my main research question are the objectives regarding *the diet and subsistence practices at Habitation La Mahaudière* and how they are situated within the general understanding of slave foodways of the French West Indies. One of my primary means to address these queries is through a quantitative analysis of faunal remains recovered from the slave village of the French plantation Habitation La Mahaudière. The majority of activity areas associated with food processing, preparation, and cooking occurred outside the slave houses. This prompted an excavation strategy that concentrated on the yard spaces between the slave homes known as houseyards to locate and retrieve faunal remains. In order to understand the plantation laborers' subsistence practices and diet patterns for slavery era and post-emancipation decades of the 19th century (although the latter

archaeological context also contained deposits associated with roughly the last 20 years of slavery), I analyzed the faunal remains by temporal context. The zooarchaeological results comprised one line of evidence. The second consisted of 17th- and 18th-century primary sources; these are largely eye-witness accounts of colonial culinary habits with special emphasis on slave diet throughout the French West Indies. Using two different forms of evidence allowed me to reconstruct a more comprehensive narrative of enslaved foodways and identity, and also an opportunity to compare the datasets in order to identify where they complement or contradict each other.

I use the concept of foodways here as defined by folklorist Jay Anderson (1971), as “the whole interrelated system of food conceptualization, procurement, distribution, preservation, preparation, and consumption shared by all members of a particular group”. As a cultural form and practice, it is also replete with symbols and meanings associated with social power (e.g., Bray 2003; Bourdieu 1979; Dietler and Hayden 2001; Hastorf and Johannessen 1993; Klippel and Morey 1986; Meigs 1984; Weismantel 1989; Welch and Scarry 1995). In particular, scholars of food studies and anthropology often examine foodways as a socially constructed system that serves as a marker of difference, via exclusion or inclusion (Appadurai 1981: 494; Dietler 1996). In historical archaeology, for example, more recent investigations of early America have shown dietary patterns that may have influenced race, class, and ethnic group formations (e.g., Cheek 1998; Diehl et al. 1998; Franklin 2001a;

Janowitz 1993; Landon 1996; Lyman 1996; McKee 1987; Otto 1984; Price 1985; Reitz 1994; Singer 1985; Yentsch 1994). In building upon the existing scholarship, I attempt to combine anthropological, historical, and sociological perspectives to ascertain the complex links that food has to various strands of culture and group self-definition (Camp 1989: 289; Gabaccia 1998; Goody 1982; Levenstein 1993; Mennell et al. 1992; Mintz 1996; Mintz and DuBois 2002). I examine the extent to which Old World and New World foodstuffs and praxis are combined to create a Creole cuisine, a wholly new foodways created both as a result of and in spite of the oppression of slavery.

As I sought to reconstruct enslaved foodways in Guadeloupe, I broadened the scope of my analysis in order to compare the French Antillean evidence with contemporaneous evidence from other parts of the Caribbean and the American South. This served two related purposes. The first was to try and situate this research within the existing literature on foodways in African Diaspora archaeology. The second was to try and determine how different historical, economic, and environmental pressures led to variability in foodways practices across the African Diaspora. Moreover, these diverse consumption patterns, when compared to the historical sources discussed in Chapter 6, may be used to contest some assumptions written during the colonial era about slave foodways and to present a richer, more multifaceted understanding of enslaved laborers through their food-related practices.

Organization of the Chapters

This study is divided into seven chapters excluding the introduction. In Chapter 2 I provide the theoretical framework for interpreting the role of foodways in the identity formation process of enslaved blacks, and in particular, how enslaved women were instrumental in this process. First, I provide a summary of French Antillean identity formation theories and its associated politics in order to contextualize my perspective on the most recent Antillean theory of Creole identity known as *créolité*. In the process of retracing how people of the past may have articulated their identity through everyday practices of vernacular traditions such as cooking, I also engage with various feminist approaches. It has been argued that *créolité* is masculinist in its perspective and that it rarely accounts for gender and sexuality in identity politics. To circumvent such biases, I link feminist theories with *créolité* for a more inclusive perspective that acknowledges the participation and contribution of enslaved women in identity formation processes that cut across gender. My approach is also informed by feminist archaeology, which adds an important dimension to this research.

Chapter 3 is divided into two sections. The first presents the history of plantation slavery in the French West Indies situates part of the social and political landscape that was most associated with the colonial expansion of France in the Americas from the 16th to the early 19th century. In an effort to recover the experiences of enslaved women, this chapter will focus on the dominant construction

of race and gender, especially their articulation via the division of labor within these plantation communities. The second section of this chapter provides the chronological background of Habitation La Mahaudière, Anse-Bertrand, Grande Terre and its context within French Antillean history.

Chapter 4 discusses the archaeological project at Habitation La Mahaudière, including a description of the site, the field procedures we used during the surveys and excavations, and a brief summary of our findings from 2001-2005. Despite several factors that complicated the construction of a site chronology, in the end it was made possible based on ceramic analysis of French pottery. The discussion of French pottery alludes to complex consumption patterns practiced by La Mahaudière laborers. The focus of Chapter 5 is the faunal collection. The first part is a discussion of the zooarchaeological methods followed by the interpretation of the faunal remains that explains the laborers' dietary choices. The interpretation is presented diachronically as I provide dietary information about the enslaved community first and then the later free laborers who continued to reside in what we've defined as the slave village of the plantation.

Chapters 6 and 7 continue on the subject of slave alimentation and diet. By alimentation, I mean the rations provided to the enslaved community by the plantation management. Chapter 6 examines French historical sources to chronicle the complex dietary pattern of the enslaved communities according to observers and

slave owners throughout the colonial period of the French Antilles. These sources have helped to summarize the main foodstuffs, and the items that would become essential to practicing slave foodways and in the diets of free laborers after emancipation. Chapter 7 has several related objectives. First, I synthesize the available historical evidence and archaeological data to interpret the dietary pattern and subsistence practices at La Mahaudière over time. Next, I present a comparative analysis of dietary practices of slave and free laborer communities from other colonial Caribbean sites as well as from slave sites of the American South. This helped to better comprehend possible dietary patterns within and variability between African diasporic sites. The final part of the chapter is a discussion of women's participation in various subsistence practices. Combining the various lines of historical and archaeological evidence grounded in my theoretical framework, I posit that Creolization informed (and continues to inform) African Guadeloupean identity, and that slave foodways served as one important vehicle through which this process was realized. Moreover, enslaved women were central to the creation of slave foodways through their daily activities such as selling foodstuffs at local markets plus their preparations and cooking of food for their families. Thus, enslaved women were central to the process of cultural identity formation in Guadeloupe. Further research may indicate that their role extended to influencing French Antillean identity throughout the Caribbean.

In the final chapter I evaluate whether the summation of my interpretations have adequately answered my research questions. I also interrogate my methods and address the effectiveness of my investigation of the French Antillean slave foodways system and the lifeways of La Mahaudière's laborers. I conclude by suggesting avenues for future research.

Significance of Research

Archaeological scholarship on European expansion in the Caribbean has been a focus of historical archaeologists for several decades. Moreover, the social context of enslaved Africans and their descendants in the Caribbean has been a significant avenue of interest since the 1980s (Haviser 1999: 4-6). As stated earlier, multiple research strategies were incorporated into my project to ascertain a fuller comprehension of black lifeways in the French West Indies, especially where foodways are concerned. Despite the achievements of, and interest in, the archaeology of the Afro Caribbean, there are some noticeable oversights. While British, Dutch and Spanish participation in plantation economies are well documented, the scholarship has often overlooked France's role and influence on the Caribbean landscape until recently (Delpuech 2001; Kelly 2002, 2004b, 2009). Historical archaeology in the French West Indies is now a burgeoning field of research. Recent inquiries demonstrate remarkably different French colonial

experiences and responses to that of their British counterparts on the Caribbean landscape; differences that warrant more exploration to understand France's impact on post-colonial social, racial, and economic processes (Kelly 2004b: 3, 2009). My dissertation is but one step to bring more attention to historical archaeology of the French West Indies. I hope to illuminate some aspects of the African responses to slavery within the French colonial context.

Another area of examination that has been neglected in the reconstruction of African lifeways in the Caribbean has been foodways studies ("foodways" is more appropriate here than subsistence since the former refers to a broader range of food-related practices and meanings). The majority of faunal assemblage studies have been conducted on the islands of the Greater Antilles. Studies that reconstruct dietary patterns based on faunal assemblages or other sources in the Lesser Antilles have been somewhat scarce (Anderson et al. 2003; Cripps 2003; Klippel 2001; Quitmeyer 2003; Sichler 2003; Varney 2003; Wild et al. 1991).² Furthermore, nearly all of these studies have focused on British colonial populations. My project's major line of inquiry is a study of food under the early modern French transatlantic expansion. My work is one of the first historical faunal studies of the French Antilles that attempts to contribute to an understanding of the role of foodways in the lives of enslaved Africans by illuminating insights into the slave diet and colonial black culinary

² Varney 2003's dissertation utilized stable isotopes of five distinct group populations of skeletons of various historic cemetery sites on Antigua, Montserrat and Guadeloupe to reconstruct diets.

praxis. It simultaneously contributes to the growing body of historic zooarchaeological studies of the Lesser Antilles.

Chapter II:

Creolité, Feminist Theory, and African Guadeloupean Identity

One of my central research goals is to define the role of enslaved women in the processes of identity formation of African Guadeloupeans through everyday practices. In this chapter I detail my theoretical framework. I turn to the theories that assist in the interpretation that these women, via foodways, formulated a space for the individual as well the community to create and express culture and identity.

This chapter centers on the participation of enslaved women in connection with general identity politics in the French Antilles as it pertains to an understanding of Caribbean Creole culture in the French islands. In order to detail the complexity of a creolized identity such as African Guadeloupean, I will provide a summary of French Antillean identity formation theories and associated politics to anchor my perspectives to the most recent understanding of identity known as *créolité*. *Créolité* was born out of a literary movement that emphasized self-definition of identity rooted in the collective memory of slavery, and it included but was not limited to a black, hybrid Caribbean-located sense of self. I entertain post-colonial French Antillean theories of identity and cultural formation as a step in the process of retracing how people of the past may have articulated their identity through every day practices

such as cooking and other food preparation methods.³ For this reason, I look to *créolité*, a recent theoretical movement of French Antillean identity politics that questions how vernacular traditions of aesthetics, art, and/or any other form of everyday practices help to create a space for the individual along with community to express culture and identity. Importantly, I frame this research within the Caribbean feminist critique of *créolité*, which does not entirely eschew *créolité* but instead seeks to transform its problematic androcentric perspective and politics. I also integrate US black feminist theory into my analysis and interpretations, which shares similar concerns.

This introduction to the politics of post-colonial French Antillean identity formation will include discussions on the two theories that influenced the writers of *créolité*: *négritude* and *antillanité*. These two theories, together with *créolité*, were revolutionary in that they were conceived mostly by black French Antillean literary intellectuals and, more importantly, challenged the European-centric, pejorative view of their race and cultures. Throughout the 20th century, from *negritude* to *antillanité*

³ That is, identity as something that is shaped by a collective or by individual practice. By extension, culture may fall within the definition of identity although the two are not necessarily synonymous. For the purposes of my argument, by identity I mean cultural identity which is characterized in two, sometimes contradictory, positions as defined by Stuart Hall: “a collective, shared history among individuals affiliated by race or ethnicity that is considered to be fixed or stable” but also as “unstable, metamorphic and even contradictory- an identity marked by multiple points of similarities as well as differences” (2003: 233-238).

to *créolité* (in that order), French Antillean cultural politics eventually culminated in the opposition of colonialism and a Western domination of Caribbean concepts of culture and identity. By the last decades of the 20th century, *créolité* championed the understanding of an identity in the French Antilles as a unique mosaic: something heterogeneous, arriving from multiple locations. However, while negritude was ultimately rejected for its monolithic view of blackness, *créolité* was critiqued for universalizing the French Antillean identity and, furthermore, viewing it as male-centered. Feminists saw this failure to acknowledge nuanced identities along the lines of gender, class, and sexuality (and not just race) as a constant problem present within all three movements. Cultural and identity politics in the French Caribbean have been an intense subject of debate throughout the 20th century (Burton 1993; Césaire 1939, 1955; Chaudenson 2002; Fanon 1991; Glissant 1981; Schnepel 2004; Valdman 2002). The following narrates how various theorists have tackled the issue of identity formation in the French Antilles. It must be noted that “identity” is purposely expressed in the singular as many major scholars and writers who have attempted to address this issue have typically done so with the assumption that there is a single, universal French Antillean identity. Alternatively, this may have been a strategic move to promote more group cohesion among Caribbean people of African descent, rather than risk highlighting the many differences that, in fact, exist between them. Even so, the reason why it has historically been a difficult task to try to describe the formation of a French Antillean identity is because a singular one did and does not

exist. Moreover, it is a problem that afflicts all other Caribbean islands, particularly in the post-colonial era. In general, a Caribbean identity has historically been understood as an embodiment of cultural pluralism that yields numerous names and processes of identity formation, including but not limited to Caribbeanness, creoleness, creolization, hybridity, metissage, and *antillanité* (Balutansky and Sourieau 1998; Bernabé et al. 1993; Bhabha 1994; Glissant 1999; Hall 2003, 2007; Knecht 1987; Laplantine and Nouss 1997; Manessy 1987; Prabhu 2007). Cross-culturally, these terms are often bound in complex and sometimes contradictory interpretations that have not allowed for a singular form of representation to emerge without challenge (Smyth 2001: 29). Thus, for those seeking to flatten Caribbean identity to a particular definition, it has been difficult to articulate because it is not singular. As is discussed below, the major issue that *antillanité* theorists had with *négritude* was its tendency to homogenize French Antillean identity. *Antillanité* is often referred to as a Creole identity in the French Antilles because of the historical process of cultural, ethnic, and racial mixing since the time of European colonization of the region. The institution of slavery along with various imposed European-based notions of racial superiority and other hegemonic forces provided a violent background for many Antilleans to respond by viewing their racial and cultural heterogeneity as a form of pride and sometimes as a weapon for cultural resistance and empowerment.

Early French Creole Identity Politics

Négritude, conceptualized in the 1930s by Martinican Aimé Césaire and several British Caribbean and African Francophone writers, was the first step in relation to modernity (Arnold 1991; Lewis 1998:66) to mapping a “true” identity and history apart from non-Western values. Césaire argued for a rejection of French political and cultural hegemony, and as descendants of people from West and Central Africa, French Antilleans should seize the African continent as its only racial, cultural, and historical antecedent. While this rhetoric initially proved to be popular, by the late 1960s and 1970s, Antillean writers turned away from *négritude* declaring that such notions of an identity were highly problematic. Critics found the philosophy of *négritude* was at fault for declaring unfounded universalism about race and culture much in the manner of the Enlightenment philosophy they heavily critiqued (Glissant 1997: 136). To put it simply, when one maintained the concept of *négritude*, it merely “replaced the illusion of Europe by an African illusion” and thus, did not solve the identity problem (Bernabé et al. 1993: 80-82). In addition to the essentialized African identity, other fundamental problems with the *négritude* movement included objections that the leaders and participants still heralded a French value system while addressing a French (and not Antillean) audience, as well as not advocating the use of Creole as the language of politics and social change for the movement (Edgar 2008: 36-38; Jack 1996: 59; Kee 2006: 4; Offord 2001: 78; Schnepel 2004: 6).

In the 1960s, Martinican Edouard Glissant posited the concept of Antillanité (“Caribbeanness”) that disagreed with a synonymous comparison of Caribbean and African identities. Those born and raised on the islands of the Caribbean could not disassociate their identity from their specific history or current locale. Rather, multifarious aspects worked to develop Caribbean identity. To be more specific, Caribbeanness is the “vision” that understands the cultural space and geographical place of the Caribbean as a distinct American or Western Hemispheric phenomenon, without foregoing the effects of European and African cultural and historical influences upon the region (Bernabé et al. 1993: 83). Thus, the Creole identity was best visually understood as the maroon: an African descendant located in the Caribbean who actively resists his imposed colonial subjectivity. This heterogeneous view of Caribbean identity, unlike *négritude*, requires the inclusion of European, indigenous Caribbean, Asian, as well as African heritages.⁴ Yet there were issues taken with this position as well (as discussed further below).

Moving forward, literary authors have primarily written more recent studies of Creole identity in the French Caribbean. Their chosen medium for interrogation and clarification is within the realm of fictional literature. Through a literary lens, French Antilleans may rehistoricize their past of racial violence, slavery, and

⁴ This character is interpreted as inherently male as seen in Aimé Césaire’s *Et les chiens se taisaient* in *Les Armes miraculeuses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970) and Edouard Glissant’s *La Case du commandeur* (Paris Editions du Seuil, 1981) and *Le Quartième siècle* (Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1964). See Lorna Milne (2001) for a detailed discussion.

colonization to reclaim what they sense is the true memory of the people, language and history of the islands (Arnold 1994; Bernabé et al. 1993: 98; Condé and Cottenet-Hage 1995; Murdoch 2001). It is their work that I discuss next.

French Antillean Theory of *créolité*

In 1989, Martinican authors Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant verbalized the problem of identity politics for French Antilleans. Although considered a literary movement, the authors, early on in their book, quickly set *créolité* apart from other literary movements such as *négritude* and *antillanité* (Chamoiseau et al. 1997; Lewis 1998:187). Within their essay *Éloge de la créolité* (*In Praise of Creoleness*), the authors argue that the French Antilleans are “fundamentally stricken with exteriority, this from a long time ago to the present day” (Bernabé et al. 1993: 76). In their collective opinion, French Antillean culture, history and identity has for too long been understood through a Eurocentric (specifically French) vision (Chamoiseau et al. 1997: 131-132; Pineau 1991: 293; Stahl 1996: 123). While *négritude* espoused a non-European identity, *créolité* writers criticized the early movement’s choice of an African identity as too essentialized. What was most troubling was *négritude*’s concept of blackness which, ironically, was based too much upon French aesthetics, and thus made the Francophone islands culturally, politically, and economically dependent on a colonial ideology (Bernabé et al. 1993:

76). As for the later movement, *antillanité*, the *créolité* authors commend Glissant for insisting on Caribbeanness as a hybridized identity. However, there are several points where the *créolité* writers do not agree with Glissant. Ultimately, Glissant's concept of Caribbean identity was embodied in the maroon, the runaway who actively resisted colonial subjectivity by leaving the plantation and escaping to the surrounding hills and mountains. *Creolité's* major critique is that marronnage was only practiced by a few. The majority of the enslaved community remained rooted to plantations in the French islands. For the *créolité* authors the maroon population is one real source of Caribbeanness but the Creole identity with its heterogeneous characteristics must have been created elsewhere as well. While Glissant did locate a hybridized identity in the archipelagos of the French Caribbean, the *créolité* authors fault Glissant for being too limited in his scope of identity politics, including not moving forward enough to demonstrate how one may discover and embrace creoleness (Bernabé et al. 1993: 84).⁵

The *créolité* authors proposed a way in which to achieve this vision of embracing creoleness. They believed that in order to fully realize a hybridized identity, one must look inward and subscribe to their *créolité* or “creoleness”. They posited, “creoleness is the cement of [their] culture and that it ought to rule the foundation of [their] Caribbeanness (Bernabé et al. 1993: 87). A French Creole identity is a product of an “interactional” phenomenon, a composite of various

⁵ This is used in the sense of geographic locale.

cultures united together within the context of French colonial and then post-colonial rule. “Creoleness is the interactional or transactional aggregate of Caribbean, European, African, Asian and Levantine cultural elements united on the same soil by the yoke of history” (Bernabé et al. 1993: 87). It is the process, always in flux, plus the exemplification of cultural mixing whose foundation was located on the plantation.

According to Jamaican feminist Patricia Mohammed (1998:9), “how identities are being affirmed or even constructed are based on real struggles which people and groups are engaged in and which they communicate to each other in coded messages within a culture...” Thus, identity politics within French Antillean theory and literature are underpinned by the concept of resistance (Bernabé et al. 1993: 80, 98, 107; Glissant 1981; Malena 1996: 5). So, the *créolité* authors embedded the roots of this identity in the enslaved person on the plantation called the “conteur créole,” (Chamoiseau et al. 1997: 144; Chamoiseau and Confiant 1991:29, 46). This notion builds on Glissant’s proposition of orality as the site of authentic and collective memory (Glissant 1990: 77-89). Orality is simultaneously the action and material that creates and allows for the production as well as the transformation of identity and culture.

The créolists believed that the use of Creole language is what Glissant termed “la résistance populaire” or an everyday kind of resistance used by the majority of the

community without demonstrating overt aggression or even violence in opposition to the colonial (or post-colonial) discourse (Glissant 1981: 67). The storyteller is not silenced; resistance and authentic history are encoded in his songs and stories. This new historical consciousness that privileges orality (and subsequently, literature) as embodied by a man is the true vessel of resistance and thus, it is the best way to represent Creole identity (Garraway 2005: 19, 21; Klein 2000: 27; Stahl 1996: 79).

Inspired by oral speakers (the griots and troubadours) and literary writers who embraced the Creole language as the core of creoleness, the Martinican writers became involved in identity politics that contested Eurocentric, especially French, descriptions and understandings of who and what they were (Bernarbé et al. 1993: 95-96; Chamoiseau et al. 1997:131).⁶ Their solution to misrepresentation and false history arrived through the understanding and acceptance of *créolité*, creoleness. The authors claimed that their manifesto did not arise from theory but from lived experiences and practice. It is based on the everyday practice of orality which stresses Creole identity, and in that articulation of identity is group resistance that diverges from colonial and post-colonial epistemologies (Chamoiseau and Confiant 1991: 56-64). Furthermore, it is a poetics movement for self-definition (Bernabé et al. 1993: 99). The *créolité* authors declared their identity politics “to any person of ideas who conceives our space (the archipelagos and its foothills of firm land, the continental

⁶ Interestingly enough, their manifesto was not written wholly in creole but in French and was critiqued for this reason (Gallagher 2007).

immensities), in any discipline whatsoever...” (Bernabé et al. 1993: 75).

Accordingly, the authors and all natives of the French Antilles should identify themselves as Creoles irrespective of race.

Feminist Critique of *créolité*

Although Patrick Chamoiseau and his coauthors did not consider *créolité* a theory but rather a movement for self-definition, many Caribbean scholars and writers do so because its roots are in the Martinican literary theories of *négritude* and *antillanité* (Bernabé et al. 1989: 18). All three sought to re-historicize French Antilleans’ colonial past, characterize the present, and develop political strategies for a transformative future (Baksh-Soodeen 1998: 82; Beckles 1998: 53; Klein 2000: 18; Lewis 1998: Malena 1996:252). Some arguments against *créolité* exhibit a linguistics foundation, debating whether popular Caribbean literature should be published in French vs. French Creole (Chamoiseau et al. 1997: 152; Gyssels 2003: 305; Le Brun 1996: 17-34; Lewis 1998: 189). Another critique finds the movement accounts more for Martinican identity and does not account for inter-island differences (Burton 1995). While others find fault with *créolité*’s discriminatory tendencies against women and women writers (Arnold 1994, 1995; Gyssels 2003: 311 see footnote 38, 312; Haigh 1999; Klein 2000; Price and Price 1987; Vergès 1995), I concentrate in the following on the critiques of Creole gender representation as it relates to my

investigation of women's participation in the formation of French Antillean identity and culture.

While aspects of *créolité* (i.e., identity is not fixed, nor should it be classified or characterized by those outside the Caribbean) are similar to other Caribbean writers' and scholars' work on identity politics, the privileging of the male gender and androcentric language as the true representation of Creole identity and culture in the French Antilles is highly problematic to anti-*créolistes* (Arnold 1995; Condé and Cottenet-Hage 1995; Lewis 1998; Klein 2000). In other words, while the French Creole identity is a unique amalgamation of African, European, and Amerindian languages and cultures, it is only personified as male. Despite some notable exceptions (Gaspar and Hine 1996: 193-278; Mathurin 1975; Okihiro 1986; Schwarz-Bart 1973), traditionally, throughout Caribbean folklore and history, slave resistance was commonly articulated by men who rejected colonial rule as well as societal norms. They opted instead for aggressive protest, such as *marronnage* (Bangou 1989; Craton 1983; Fick 1990; James 1938; Moitt 2000a; Mullin 1992: 34-61, 241-267; Olwig 1985) or for more subtle ways of resistance by retaining African culturalisms (i.e., music, storytelling, and religion) in an environment that imposed the practices of European language and culture (Herskovits 1958, 1964; Holloway 1990). Again, these interpretations of the production of French Caribbean identity are typically androcentric (Arnold 1995; Vergès 1995). Critics of *créolité* hold that the centering of language and any other everyday practices of vernacular tradition that are

(supposedly) practiced strictly by men merely reproduces the same problems of racist colonial discourses in French historiographies of their Caribbean colonies originally argued against by *créolité* authors (Arnold 1995: 40; Condé 1993; Condé and Cottenet-Hage 1995; Gallagher 1994: 5-6; Haigh 1999: 149; Klein 2000: 25; Milne 2001; Price and Price 1987). While black women held the lowest subordinate position in colonial society, they too devised a variety of ways to subvert and resist the politics of power, which played a role in the self-construction of their identity (Gaspar 1996: 229; Mohammed 1998: 9; Moitt 1996: 245). However, for *créolité* adherents, women's contribution to identity formation is nearly absent.

It seems that for the authors of *créolité*, sexuality and especially gender inhabit a peculiar position. In general, *créolité* tends toward the reductive: a masculinist perspective that rarely accounts for intersecting properties of gender, sexuality, and even nationality, when defining "legitimate" concepts of French Antillean identity. *Créolité* renders women, at best, ambivalent participants and at worse, invisible spectators of identity formation which ultimately implies a gendered hierarchy and an imbalance of power (Arnold 1995: 21; Condé 1993; Condé and Cottenet-Hage 1995; Price and Price 1997: 17; Haigh 1999: 149; Milne 2001; Suk 2001: 155). Moreover, while *créolité* critics agree that every day practices, such as storytelling, create and reinforce identity, it is these critics' claims of exclusivity of the storyteller's gender that reinforces the traditions of male dominance in the Caribbean cultural sphere (Arnold 1994, 1995; Condé 1993; Condé and Cottenet-

Hage 1995; Milne 2001; Suk 2001). Contemporary Caribbean women writers such as Maryse Condé, Edwidge Danticat, Simone Schwarz-Bart, Dany Bébel-Gisler, and Myriam Warner-Vieyra have remarked on the importance of oral tradition to Creole identity and culture (and its centrality in the production of collective memory) but attributed it to their mothers, aunts, and other female family members who related stories to them throughout their formative years and beyond (Arnold 1994: 11-13; Casey 1995: 525-26; Milne 2001: 61; Pineau 195: 290).

In short, any theoretical discussion of subjectivity and group identity cannot assume gender specificity. The omission of gender difference abandons the mosaic nature of identity and when “male” is assumed it is either thought to be representative of everyone, or erases all other genders categorically from the narrative. The diversity of experiences along the lines of gender is integral to understanding culture (Klein 2000: 18; Mohammed 1994: 32). *Créolité* ignores women as co-producers of Creole identity (Arnold 1994: 16-17; Klein 2000: 18; Mohammed 1994: 32-33; Price and Price 1997: 10). It is because there is little mention of women’s subjectivity in *Élogé de la créolité* that women, for the most part, are silenced or absent. What is worse is the *créolité* authors’ claim that when someone tries to assert their Creole identity through speech it is a woman that represses the creative process of creoleness: “Every time a mother, thinking she is favoring the learning of the French language, represses Creole in a child’s throat, she is in fact bearing a blow to the latter’s imagination, repressing his creativity” (Bernabé et al. 1989: 104). This statement is a sexist and

denigrating stereotype that accuses women of stifling the creative Antillean character in her children while imposing upon them the dominant French language.

Furthermore, female portrayals in *créolité* novels are also a space for contestation.

While women are silenced and are not agents in the production of creoleness, when present they are there for reproductive purposes or as sexual objects for men. She is either whore or slave (Arnold 1994: 17; Gyssels 2003: 307).

Not surprisingly, many female writers and French Antillean scholars position themselves in opposition to *créolité* writers, believing that *créolité* is contrived and reductive, privileging only men as producers of Creole identity and culture (Arnold 1994, 1995; Condé 1989, 1993; Condé and Cottenet-Hage 1995; Gyssels 2003: 306; Haig 1999; Milne 2001; Price and Price 1997; Suk 2001: 155; Vergès 1995).⁷ Instead, critics not only called for the reclamation of Francophone history, identity, and culture from white, Western discourses but also to discard the singular male perspective that has long dominated the interpretation of Caribbean history. When characterizing French Antillean identity, there must be an acknowledgement of subjects (and cultures) that are heterogeneous, arriving from multiple locations with nuanced complexities along the lines of gender, class, and sexuality (Bernabé et al. 1993: 112-114; Pineau 1995: 295).

⁷ These critiques are not based solely on *Éloge de la créolité* but also on the basis of women's portrayal as passive sexual objects in the authors' fictional novels which include Chamoiseau's *Texaco*, *Chronicle of the Seven Sorrows*, and Confiant's *Ravines du devant-jour*, and *L'Allée des soupirs*. For an in-depth analysis of these novels, see Gyssel (2003) and Milne (2001).

In an attempt to flesh out these anti-*créolité* arguments and redefine creoleness, author Maryse Condé co-edited a volume compiled by writers, scholars and other critics in 1995 entitled *Penser la créolité* to stand as a counter-manifesto that addressed many of the criticisms mentioned above. Since the authors felt that the concept of *créolité* was not grounded in the gender and class struggles of Martinique and Guadeloupe, there needed to be a rethinking of *créolité* by engaging in politics of inclusion rather than *créolité*'s exclusionary manner (Condé and Cottenet-Hage 1995: 18, 310).⁸

Bridging Feminist Theories, *créolité*, and Historical Archaeology

An initial reading of *Élogé de la créolité* and its identity politics through self-definition is seductive. Caribbean scholars and authors that side against *créolité* do share some general thoughts on French Antillean identity and culture. Some include critiques of Negritude for adopting essentialist ideas on race and culture. Building on Glissant's *antillanité*, *créolité* heralded a new concept of identity; one that is hybrid,

⁸ Noted female authors such as Mayotte Capécia have been contributing to a literature of women's participation in French Antillean cultural production since the 1940s. There are many examples of Martinican, Guadeloupean and Haitian texts that include critical writings, interviews, the re-telling of traditional folktales, as well as fictional works by Maryse Condé, Gisèle Pineau, Françoise Pfaff, Simone Schwatz-Bart, Marie Vieux Chauvet, Dany Bébel-Gisler, Christine Hazaël-Massieux, Françoise Ega, Ina Césaire, among many others that provide an alternative to the créolists' masculinist perspective of Creole identity (Stahl 1996: 179-182, 202 footnote 7).

ever-changing, Caribbean-born, and that should not be exoticized by Caribbean outsiders. However, for reasons mentioned above, it is impossible to overlook the blatant points of discord through a gendered perspective. For this reason, Condé and most French Antillean female writers do not consider themselves créolists. However, I do believe it is possible to build upon the *créolité*'s core concepts and make it more inclusive of class, gender, and sexuality. Thus, I attempt to find links between feminist critiques and the *créolité* vision of re-historicizing the French Antillean past and the interpretation of Creole identity and culture. As my work endeavors to provide an alternative understanding of the construction of Creole culture and identity during the centuries of slavery throughout the French Antilles, I use U.S. black and Caribbean feminism as a way to re-envision *créolité* and approach archaeological interpretations of gender and identity.

My approach is also informed by feminist archaeology. Since the groundbreaking emergence of feminist archaeology in the mid 1980s (Conkey and Spector 1984), many scholars including myself have earnestly attempted to engender the past. Feminist archaeologists have stated that gender is a categorizing process that is socially, historically and culturally contingent and that gender should be a viable avenue for archaeological analysis and interpretation (Gero and Conkey 1991; Gilchrist 1999; Nelson 1997; Spector 1991). Research on gender in the past encompasses prehistoric and historical archaeology, and history, including that of

slavery in the Caribbean and the Americas (Fabi 1993; Mohammed 1998: 8; Morrissey 1989; White 1985).

Theoretical frameworks that recognize gender, race, class, sexual and other socially constructed differences have influenced historical archaeology for over 20 years (e.g., Delle et al. 2000; Nikolai 2003; Orser 1998; Samford 1996; Siefert 1991; Spencer-Wood 1987; Singleton 1999; Wall 1994; Wilkie 2000). Engendered methodologies have included but are not limited to finding women via artifact patterning and examining the nature of material culture to contribute to the dialogue on women's agency and choices (Gibb and King 1991; Purser 1991; Nikolai 2003; Seifert 1999; Wall 1991, 1994). However, it becomes problematic when approaches center on only one form of oppression in the archaeological study of enslaved Africans and their descendants (Franklin 2001b: 112). Thus, it has been argued that an analysis of gender should not be in isolation from other social variables (Delle et al. 2000: xii; Franklin 2001b: 112; Gilchrist 1994: 8). Productions of knowledge should be driven by an analysis of the intersectionality of gender with other structurally hierarchical categories of difference (e.g., Mullins 1999; Otto 1984; Voss 2000; Wilkie 1996a). A black feminist theoretical approach to archaeological investigations of slavery has the potential to reveal the different forms of womanhood that existed in the New World, including among those enslaved (Franklin 2001b; Wilkie 2000).

By incorporating a black feminist perspective I seek to avoid conflating black women's and men's experiences of slavery. While much of the conditions of plantation life were shared by men and women, their experiences of oppression, exploitation (especially sexually), discipline and punishment did differ.⁹ In this research, I kept the above in mind when reading through primary and secondary sources. Moreover, feminist theorizing helped to identify potential examples of how women's agency, resistance, and Creole identity formation were negotiated within the context of slavery. This was especially true while considering the yardspace, the space and place with the dual function of private household and shared public work areas for activities including those associated with foodways.

This problem of patriarchal epistemologies, replicated in the humanities and sciences (Harding 1986; Jagger 1983; Reiter 1975), has prompted feminist Caribbean native scholars to re-examine subjectivity and to attempt to de-privilege the male experience (see also Trouillot 1992:27). Much like U.S. black feminist approaches, feminist theory in the Caribbean draws on intersectional analysis for exploring difference and self-making with particular emphasis on the intersections of race, class, gender and sexuality (Alexander and Mohanty 1997: xvii; Baksh-Soodeen 1998:74; Bolles 2001; Combahee River Collective 1983; Mohammed 1998: 9; Taylor 1998: 235). Patricia Hill Collins (1992) explains that asserting a black women's voice

⁹ Not to mention the aspect of motherhood and childbearing which were both uniquely gendered experiences exclusive to women.

in defining their own sense of identity and shaping their own representations are central, as the alternative is to leave it in the hands of others. Self-identification is a form of resistance, demonstrating the need to carve out and retain an equal place in society, and be recognized and validated as having the right to belong (Mohammed 1998: 7; e.g. Moore 1994: 2). Caribbean and black American feminists argue that women of color's experiences are entwined with different forms of oppression and, therefore, are dissimilar to Euro-American and black male struggles (Mohanty et. al 1991). As such, they required different strategies for change (Alexander and Mohanty 1997; Combahee River Collective 1983). Caribbean feminist theory strives to acknowledge and address these differences that continue to inform male-female power relations throughout society while attempting to transform and transcend them (Mohammed 2000: 118). The struggles against racial, class, and gender inequalities through political activism underscore the commonalities between U.S. black feminists and Caribbean feminists (Combahee River Collective 1983; Mohammed 1998; Taylor 1998).

Another point shared by both groups is their historical origin. Caribbean feminists, like their non-white American counterparts (Collins 2000; Steady 1981; Taylor 1998: 241; Terborg-Penn 1987; White 1985), disagreed with the 1960s-1970s Euro-American feminist movement's naïve summation of a presumed universality of womanhood and women's subordination. While European, Native American, and Asian groups have racially and ethnically influenced the Caribbean, the majority of

the region's population is descended from African ancestors, resulting in a perspective and identity grounded in various notions of blackness. While Caribbean feminism as a theoretical framework for identity politics came into being in the 1970s to challenge male-centered post-colonial discourses, this approach – as with U.S. black feminism - considered how gender interacts with race, national origin, sexuality, and class.

A third similarity is located in epistemology. Both Caribbean and U.S. black feminist groups use standpoint theory as a theoretical tool necessary to empower women by validating women's experiences (Schwarz-Bart 1972, Tolbert 2010:13-16). Feminist epistemology and methodology allows one to study black women's experiences that rely on considerations of their subjectivity and every day lived experiences (Collins 2000:267). Standpoint theory, while still somewhat controversial (see Harding 1986), privileges a person's disadvantaged position and awareness of that position to accurately provide a broader view of their social reality: "the double vision of the dominant world view and their own minority perspective (e.g., female, black, and poor)" (Baksh-Soodeen 1998: 77; see also Hill Collins 2000: 24-25; Slocum 2001: 138-139). It aids Caribbean and U.S. feminist approaches to de-privilege Eurocentric and black masculinist voices as the authorities on theories regarding cultural production and identity formation (Baksh-Soodeen 1998: 76-77; Gilliam 2001: 174-175; Hill Collins 2000: 253-256). Furthermore, any participant of a culture is given equal value on the interpretation of their own social reality.

The commonality between U.S. black feminism, Caribbean feminism, and recent French Antillean literature and theory is how each approaches theorizing the process of constructing identity. Influenced by previous post-colonial discourses of the French Antilles, *créolité* authors urge the Creole people of Martinique and Guadeloupe to recover their true identity and history apart from French cultural hegemony. This “true” identity acknowledged and celebrated its mosaic composition and plantation-based origins from slavery. Moreover, through the everyday practices of orality and other vernacular traditions, the Creole identity articulated resistance against the oppressions of colonial society followed by French cultural hegemony in the post-colonial years. However, this interpretation of identity was limiting in that it did not account for the intersection of gender, race, class, sexuality, and even nationality. *Créolité*’s authors challenged Western colonial and post-colonial discourses of Creole identity, and by extension, their related discourses on the formation of Creole culture. *Créolité* was succeeded by a Caribbean feminist critique demanding the de-centering of male cultural authority to bridge the gap between non-Western identity politics of *créolité* and Caribbean feminist approaches. Building on the understanding of self-definition that strives to avoid Western hegemony, an incorporation of black feminist theories from the U.S. and the Caribbean can work to circumvent sexist, classist, and patriarchal assumptions through intersectional analysis. It is that possibility of convergence that theoretically informs my work. As a black female archaeologist of Haitian ancestry studying enslaved women’s roles in

the cultural production of French Antillean identity, standpoint theory provides a necessary position for a reflexive, analytical strategy in understanding fluid and multi-positioned subjectivities. In short, it provides me with an inclusive perspective that helps me be more critical of my historic sources and archaeological data as I strive to find empowerment through the plurality of enslaved women's experiences, especially with foodways.

With the theoretical framework of my study disclosed, I turn now to the historical evidence to provide the background of Habitation La Mahaudière. This plantation is my case study, and in the next chapter I situate its place in the French social and political landscape from the 16th to the early 19th centuries.

Chapter III:

THE HISTORY OF SLAVERY IN THE FRENCH WEST INDIES AND HABITATION LA MAHAUDIÈRE

This chapter is concerned with the history of plantation slavery in the French West Indies with an emphasis on the archipelagos of Guadeloupe. This general historical background will include summaries of the plantation economy and the slave trade from the *ancien régime* (the 16th to the 18th centuries that were most associated with the colonial expansion of France in the Americas until the French Revolution 1789) to the last decades of slavery and colonization in the French Caribbean.¹⁰ The purpose of this chapter is to provide the context for my interpretations of the evidence recovered from Habitation La Mahaudière especially that related to the role of enslaved women in cultural production (foodways) and identity formation. The contributions of enslaved women to the history of the French Antilles are often absent in historical records and, until recently, in academic scholarship. This dissertation research is an attempt to build upon the existing literature that speaks to enslaved women's experiences.

This chapter centers on the dominant construction of race and gender and its articulation via the division of plantation labor during the era of slavery. I will highlight some of the unique circumstances of slavery on Guadeloupe, and will focus

¹⁰ The French term for this period is known as the *ancien régime*- "old regime"- that refers to the social and political system before the French Revolution of 1789.

on enslaved women who, until recently, have not always been adequately acknowledged in the literature. More specifically, I will offer some insight into their contributions to the colonial French Antillean community as a whole as well as to a burgeoning creolized identity. By addressing enslaved women's experiences and their contributions, a more heterogeneous and complex narrative emerges of slave life in the French Caribbean. The final section of this chapter provides the chronological background of Habitation La Mahaudière. I attempt to situate the site within the greater context of French West Indian history before moving forward with my questions about women's roles in the production of Creole culture and identity via foodways.

French Colonization of Guadeloupe

On November 4, 1493, during his second voyage to the New World, Columbus encountered the island known by its inhabitants as *Karukéra* ('Island of Beautiful Waters'), soon to be renamed "Guadeloupe" (Satineau 1928: 5). The inhabitants, the Caribs or Kalinas, were reported to be fierce warriors and would not be easily dominated (Allaire 1997: 180-185; Carrera Damas 2003: 328; Labat 1970: 102, 110). From the beginning of the 16th century, Guadeloupe was occupied sporadically. The Spaniards of the Greater Antilles sought to make slaves of Caribs and made two attempts to settle Guadeloupe but were repelled both times by Carib

resistance and finally abandoned their claim to the island in 1604. There would not be any significant attempt to claim or settle Guadeloupe for another 29 years (Bangou 1989; Bolton and Marshall 1920: 93, 252; Martineau 1935; Satineau 1928).

In 1633, Liénart de L'Olive, Lieutenant de d'Esnambuc, sponsored by the Compagnie des Iles d'Amérique (an association of French entrepreneurs), along with the help of Guillaume d'Orange and Jean du Plessis, traveled to the French territories of the Windward Islands with the interest of establishing permanent occupation of the islands. Looking to settle and develop their new territories for economic gain, the French initially pursued the readily available Native American labor, yet the early French settlers learned quickly that the Caribs would not be coerced into a life of servitude. The Caribs opted to either run away or chose death (Satineau 1928:62-65). As the colonists could not use the enslaved Native American workforce for long, a white workforce, *la main-d'oeuvre blanche* or *les engagés*, of French agriculturalists and skilled workers were sent to increase the value of the colony.

Less than ten years after L'Olive settled Guadeloupe, the territory was developing quickly with the aid of *les engagés*. The first 150 *engagés* arrived with L'Olive and du Plessis, along with four missionaries and several families, to colonize Guadeloupe (Martineau 1935:179). Over the next several decades, the native population was killed, driven off the island, and/or retreated to remote areas of the archipelagos deemed undesirable for plantation crop production.

Essentially, the *engagés* were the indentured labor force that was responsible for the development of the new French colonies in the Caribbean. *Engagés* were generally poor white French men who submitted themselves to the military (the navy, in particular) or in front of local judges for a leave of three years with the representative of a commercial company or those who would have power over them (Eccles 1972: 148; Satineau 1928: 65). In exchange for complete servitude, the *engagés* were promised four to five times the normal rate of wages with the possibility to acquire land after their indentured contract was complete (Eccles 1972: 149). In some cases, *engagés* would serve with either the military or military-associated commercial companies. Under these conditions, their role was to serve in the conquest of the territory, rather than in achieving immediate economic goals. Moreover, there were also *engagés* that came to the French Caribbean as skilled laborers such as masons and carpenters (Satineau 1928:65-67).

In other cases, *engagés* were contracted to a planter and served under their command. In the first decades of the French Caribbean colonies, many planters struggled financially to sustain their small tobacco, cotton, indigo, sugar, and cocoa farms and did not have financial means to recruit workers. Yet, with the aid of a joint-stock company, Le Compagnie des Isles, this type of indentureship became popular from 1642 to 1662 (Eccles 1972: 149; Satineau 1928: 66). Increasingly, less men were brought over by the 1690s (Moitt 2001: 7).

The *engagés* were required to work 12-hour days, year round, performing extremely laborious jobs like clearing and preparing large plots of land for crop cultivation, cane-crushing, and working in sugar-works boiler rooms. After their three-year service, very few *engagés* could acquire land because the French Crown ceased to grant seigneurial tenure after 1663 (Eccles 1972: 149). With the possibility of climbing up the social scale by joining the *grands blancs* (the planter class) stripped from them, former *engagés* became the *petits blancs*, working in lower-status jobs such as plantation overseers, artisans, refinery workers and shopkeepers in and around ports and towns (Eccles 1972: 151).

Guadeloupe's cash crops began with a variety of small farms growing tobacco, cotton, or indigo. However, the colonial economy was soon to change. In 1644, Jean Aubert began the production of sugar and a few farms started experimenting with the sugar cane crop. Sugar cane proved to be a successful crop and was to become the French Caribbean's and, most especially, Guadeloupe's greatest economic resource (Lassere 1961 vol. 1: 270-290; Martineau 1935:181).

On February 28, 1654, Governor Houel accommodated 900 Dutch refugees from Brazil in Guadeloupe who were cast out by the Portuguese. More importantly, a third of the refugees were enslaved African laborers (Bangou 1989: 92-93; Lacour 1976: 124). These enslaved workers possessed a number of industrial and agricultural skills including how to plant sugar cane. Others were skillful at industrial pottery

production, making vessel forms for storing and sampling the sugar product (Lacour 1976: 125). By 1660, the Dutch had brought enough labor to the island to average 25 enslaved Africans per plantation (Schnakenbourg 1980: 85). The Dutch were allowed to stay on the condition that they shared their precious techniques of sugar production with Guadeloupe colonists in exchange for sanctuary (Munford 1991 vol.1: 509; Satineau 1928: 118-119).

Sugar Revolution

With the production of tobacco rapidly becoming dominated by the English in North America, sugar and the development of slavery needed to cultivate and process it became the primary concerns of the French in the Antilles (Batie 2000: 212; Eltis 2000: 196; Higman 2000: 214; Munford 1991: 438). All French islands made a radical, economic change from small farms that featured the original cash crops to medium to large plantations to specifically grow and produce sugar by the 1670s.¹¹ This rapid and large-scale transition ushered in Guadeloupe's greatest period of colonial growth (Lassere 1961 vol. 1: 276; Munford 1991: 505; Satineau 1928: 113). These large land holdings would require more and more laborers forced to work intensive and arduous day and night shifts. *Engagés*, viewed as too expensive and unable to tolerate Caribbean temperatures and working conditions, were no longer

¹¹ These plantations were called *habitations* in French.

considered as a viable workforce (Munford 1991: 525). Sugar cane culture required a large workforce that was resistant to the continual effects of the tropical temperatures and sunlight. Thus, the French opted to follow the examples of the Portuguese and the Dutch of South America and use captive Africans. Europeans found enslaved Africans to be cheaper, more plentiful and better suited for such labor (Moreau de Saint-Mère 1958: 46). The joint-stock company Le Compagnie des Isles gave its approval to start trafficking enslaved Africans to the French Caribbean to begin sugar cultivation. On a smaller scale, they continued to produce various crop cultures including tobacco, cotton, indigo, and now, ginger (Batie 2000: 213; Satineau 1928: 84-86). By the 1670s, Guadeloupe began receiving some of its earliest enslaved workforce, known as *la main-d'oeuvre esclave*. Although colonial demographic records show that the French islands cumulatively had 13,000 whites and 10,000 enslaved Africans (Batie 2000: 219), Guadeloupe ranked a distant second to Martinique in the importation of enslaved Africans during the mid-to-late 17th century with colonial accounts of newly imported enslaved Africans numbering in the low 20s or less per plantation (Munford 1991 vol. 1: 468, 472).

Like other French islands, Guadeloupe eventually embraced sugar monoculture. Elsewhere in the French Antilles, indigo and cotton continued to be significant cash crops, but coffee soon became the second most important export by the 1750s (Martineau 1935:158; Satineau 1928: 113). As the French islands began to flourish, they became a great exporter of colonial goods to Europe with sugar

representing half of the total exports (Batie 1976:41; Butel 2000: 197-198), and they challenged the success of English trade (Butel 2000:195; Martineau 1935:172). The European market demand for colonial goods continued to rise, requiring plantations (especially those that grew sugar cane) to expand production, which required more slave labor.

This next section will detail various jobs (skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled) that enslaved Africans occupied and the gendered division of labor on French plantations. While this discussion primarily is about labor on sugar plantations, there were many occupational generalities about the labor force that were synonymous for coffee plantations and other crop cultures on large plantations.

Gendered Division of Plantation Labor

Slave population statistics have shown that since the onset of French colonization, while there were limited numbers of enslaved Africans, black women were part of the crop economies of the Caribbean islands, and in some cases, outnumbered black men two to one (Moitt 2001: 5, 8). Upon arrival, enslaved women, like men, were immediately branded and set to work. The overwhelming majority of enslaved Africans was made to work on the sugar plantations but raised other crops as well. Throughout the colonial years and after emancipation, French

society was hierarchical by race and gender, and by law, white women served a subordinate role to white men. It followed that enslaved Africans were subordinated to both white men and women. Furthermore, enslaved African women were relegated to the bottom of the social scale, rendering them almost invisible although they served as the backbone of the plantation economy in terms of physical labor.

Fieldwork

As the French colonists grew more accustomed to plantation systems, they became more reliant on a slave-based labor force as demonstrated by their predecessors in this area, the Portuguese and Dutch. Many jobs required the enslaved Africans to work alongside the *engagés* creating class tensions between the planters and the white working class (Gautier 1985: 193-194). But by the last quarter of the 17th century, fewer *engagés* were immigrating to the islands, while planters preferred to acquire more enslaved Africans. Enslaved Africans would soon come to dominate the French Antilles plantation labor force. In terms of field labor, age and gender figured strongly in the selection of workers. In general, women were required to work the same tasks as men with only a few exceptions. On plantations, with the exception of those on St. Domingue (Geggus 1996: 259), proportionately more women worked in the fields than men as was common in other parts of the Caribbean (Moitt 1996:

239; Labat 1742 vol. 2: 191).¹² Large numbers of the primary gang (*grand atelier*), consisting of enslaved adult men and women, were forced to prepare the grounds for sowing, dig irrigation ditches, fight off rodents, and plant and maintain the field crops until the time came for harvest, creating a “mortal strain” on the slave labor force (Fallope 1992: 115; Moitt 2000b: 1018-1019; Munford 1991 vol. 2: 532). The second gang weeded, fertilized the grounds, cleared debris from surrounding areas, and packed and secured cut cane for transport to the mill. This group was also often responsible for raising food crops. For projects that required more patience than strength and stamina, such as processing manure or tasks associated with harvest, women and children were exclusively used (Fallope 1992: 114). Pregnant women and mothers breastfeeding newborns were not exempt from work gangs and most likely worked the second *atelier* with children and newly imported Africans. More importantly, while men and women did share field gang responsibilities, the burden of hard labor most often fell on women (Geggus 1996: 261; Moitt 1996: 239; Moitt 2001: 33).

¹² Throughout the centuries of slavery enslaved African women in Jamaica were also the majority of fieldworkers whether or not they outnumbered the general enslaved male population (Mair 2000: 390-391).

Skilled and Semi-skilled Labor

Skilled artisans and construction workers such as coopers, masons, carpenters, sawyers, wheelwrights, stonemasons, blacksmiths, and potters were always men (Geggus 1996: 260). Positions associated with transportation were also gender specific. For example, chauffeurs for the planter's family, and mule and oxcart drivers (for firewood for the boilers, for cut cane stalks for the mills, and for other supplies and equipment associated with the sugar-making process) were restricted to men only (Vanony-Frisch 1985: 101-103). Inside the sugarworks, men were responsible for the boilers and purifying the syrup. When necessary, women were also assigned to the sugarworks' factories but only to assist in cleaning the boilers during the sugar-making process, or to stoke fires under the boilers. Apparently, the proper skills required to manage the delicate chemical balance and complex processes required to make a final sugar product could not be entrusted to women (Munford 1991: 536-539, 572).

Black women, whether African born, Creole (i.e., a person of African descent born on the island), or of mixed blood, could never occupy a supervisory position (Geggus 1996: 260). While enslaved men were usually not overseers—a position held by an *engage*—they did manage others as slave drivers. However, black women were never allowed the authority to terrorize other enslaved workers with whippings on order of the white overseers. Nor were they allowed to distribute the weekly rations.

That was done by the overseer or an old enslaved male entrusted by the planter (Debien 2000: 174). At best, an enslaved woman, usually one too old for fieldwork, would cook and watch over a pot of food reserved for feeding field hands during their afternoon break (Debien 2000: 175).

It is telling that one of the most dangerous jobs on a sugar plantation—feeding cane through the rolling blades—was reserved for women (Fallope 1992: 115; Moitt 2000b: 1019). The rolling mills, used to crush cane stalks and extract sugar cane juice, were in continuous motion day and night. If a woman accidentally had her sleeve or hand caught in between the rollers, the best anyone could do was to cut that appendage off to save her life. Such brutal stress affected a woman's reproductive system and, not surprisingly, enslaved African women often had difficulty carrying a pregnancy to full term. If so, they tended to have only one or two children (Gautier 1985: 273; Vanony-Frisch 1985: 68). The lack of regard for black women's bodies and their lives cannot be overstated. Their value in the field was strictly as an able body for manual labor, but one without skills enough to be trusted with simple and monotonous trips around the plantation by oxcarts, never mind with the elaborate techniques of sugar purification in the sugarworks.

Division of Domestic Labor within the Slaveowner's House

Enslaved Africans were brought not only to work the crop cultures in the field but also to hold domestic and artisan positions that would assist in the French colonists' desire to retain the aristocratic French way of life in a Caribbean setting. The French colonists had a general tendency to acquire a large domestic staff to manage a variety of services. In the domestic realm, while both men and women were present, more women occupied positions within households. Moreover, some domestic and specialized occupations were gender specific. For example, women solely held the household positions of laundress, midwife, nursemaid, and housekeeper (Moitt 2001: 35). Artisans, such as shoemakers, tailors, mattress makers, wigmakers, dressmakers, and other specialized positions such as valets and general house servants were dominated by men (Vanony-Frisch 1985: 89-93).

Gender and Culinary Expertise

While situated in the domestic realm, the house cook was also a specialized occupation for the French. Unlike their American counterparts where women were almost always preferred for house cooks, men or women could occupy this position in the French Antilles (Gautier 1985: 204). In fact, historian David Geggus found workforce lists for late 18th-century Saint-Domingue plantations with absentee

planters that described 29 male cooks and 10 female cooks (Geggus 1978: 45). On Guadeloupe, a representative sample of the enslaved population compiled from an inventory of 8,820 individuals between 1770 and 1789 demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of cooks were men. Of the 41 cooks on record, 37 were listed as male. Moreover, 15 of the cooks were African—a rare ethnic representation for such a profession—where the majority of the house staff was usually island-born or Creole (Vanony-Frisch 1985: 92). This must have been an unusual adjustment for the enslaved African men chosen for this position considering that in many African societies, women dominated the culinary sphere.

The planter class of the French Antilles placed a considerably high value on house cooks and this is evidenced in the colonial records of slave sales (Geggus 1978: 31-45). As some of the most expensive slave labor, cooks could be valued as much as 8,000 pounds in comparison to artisans or some other specialized professions that brought in an average of 2,000 pounds (Vanony-Frisch 1985: 90-92). The high valuation of enslaved house cooks, who were mostly men, was directly related to French social practices.

By the 17th century, European courtly cuisine and the tradition of professional cooking encompassed several social and technical differentiations that were articulated through gender (Trubeck 2000: 125). For various historical, psychological and sociological reasons, the importance of gastronomy and haute cuisine in French

ideology would correspond to high status and privilege and always be associated with men (Mennell 1985: 201). “Domestic cookery was [in France] seen as primarily the preserve of females, whether paid [as] women cooks or [seen as] housewives cooking for their own families” (Mennell 1985:200). In other words, while women were at the center of kitchens for the middle and lower classes, the wealthy dined on extravagant meals prepared by solely male chefs. In an effort to imitate the French aristocracy and royal court back in the metropole, the creation and serving of food always encompassed the performance of status and wealth. Although elite households in the French Antilles were not public or royal spaces, the need to emulate courtly culinary traditions extended to the gendered division of labor and a preference for men in the kitchen.

Chefs were often the highest paid members of a French household staff (Mennell 1985:202). Male chefs were the embodiment of prestigious culinary knowledge, acting as authorities on French taste and pleasures of the palate. Whenever possible, it appears that slave owners preferred to have male house cooks which reflected their French belief in men as the authoritative figures on cuisine. Thus, French planters placed an emphasis on using trained enslaved male cooks and endeavored to replicate, as best as possible, all the French meals that reinforced the planters’ identity of the French upper class. However, culinary adaptations due to the Caribbean landscape and lack of reliable French supplies allowed for the introduction of new foodstuffs such as chocolate, regional spices, and local flora and fauna onto

white colonial dinner tables, thus adding a creolized experience to French identity in the islands.

A Changing Landscape(s)

Despite the low slave population numbers at the beginning of French Caribbean colonization (with less than 5,000 in any Antillean colony), the social climate and relationship between planters, the white working class and the enslaved community were always capricious. Although French sugar culture in the islands was on the rise, fewer *engagés* immigrated to the islands and *grands blancs* became more dependent on the enslaved African labor force. While planters relied on a growing black workforce, the change in racial demographics juxtaposed with marronage and slave revolts caused fear among the white colonists. Furthermore, while the division of plantation labor was solidified, the volatile social climate was growing and cementing throughout the 17th century between the planter class and the enslaved communities.

I now discuss two factors that were inextricably bound together: the growth of plantations (and subsequent growth of racial violence against enslaved Africans) and changing racial demographics. These interlocked dynamics negatively affected the social, racial and physical landscapes of the French Antilles.

Violence as a Product of Plantation Growth

As Guadeloupe became entrenched in the “sugar revolution”, planters chose not to create more suitable social and living conditions for the enslaved labor force (Gaston 1948: 19; Munford 1991: 511; Satineau 1928:112-113). Plantations continued to expand and new plots of land were converted to sugar cultivation at an accelerating rate. This diminished the lands that may have been set aside for food production, thus increasing the colony’s dependence on France for provisions. Historian Dale Tomich (2000a:431) argues that there was a correlation between plantation size and racial violence inflicted on the enslaved labor force. In other words, when plantations were smaller, corporal punishment was relatively unknown. Labor output was not as stressful on smaller estates. The planter and his smaller labor force were in closer proximity to one another which may have allowed for less rigid social interactions. Yet, because of the increasing number of enslaved laborers entering the islands, the colonial administration was urged by planters to take measures to ensure the safety of the white population. The situation was viewed as threatening, especially in the areas where the population was almost exclusively black. To create greater distance physically and socially between the master planter and his labor force, new personnel such as overseers and administrators were introduced. Also, discipline became more severe thereby creating a social environment with an increased potential for more racial violence. By the 1660s, Guadeloupe’s slave population was less than 5,000 yet had witnessed several slave

revolts and maroon activity (Curtin 1969: 78; Munford 1991: 506). These revolts and acts of marronnage were often associated with environmental disasters (such as hurricane devastation of crops) and the consistent negligence of planters to appropriately supply food to the enslaved (Lacour 1976: 130; Debien 2000: 183).

With internal social relations already exacerbated, the French Antilles were moving ever closer to an economic shift towards sugar production and the need for more laborers. The possibility of a racial balance on the islands slipped further away in 1701 when France acquired the *Treaty of Asiento*, the Spanish judicial right to monopolize the slave trade between Africa and the Spanish Americas. This treaty permitted France to control the monopoly of African slave trade (Martineau 1935:65). France made haste and began to import large numbers of enslaved Africans to their island colonies. While Saint-Domingue received the greatest bounty, Guadeloupe also began to import slave laborers in significant numbers (Munford 1991 vol. 1: 468). Thus, slave importations to the French colonies rose exponentially during this period (Curtin 1969: 78; Martineau 1935: 192-194; Munford 1991 vol. 2: 454).

Race and Gender Demographics

While much of the French Antilles forged ahead with sugar cane as their greatest cash crop, not all of the islands were identical in social circumstance. For example, the racial demographics in the Windward Islands were markedly different than that of Saint-Domingue. While most *grands blancs* of Saint-Domingue preferred

to remain in France while securing on-site plantation management, the French planter class of Guadeloupe and Martinique achieved colonial aristocracy that was based on continuous residence in the islands (Butel 2002: 146; Dubois 1998: 51). Martinique's 1660 census showed a slave population of approximately 2,683 compared to 2,580 whites (Moitt 2001: 12). The census of 1671 of Guadeloupe indicated that the population stood at 3,083 whites, 4,267 blacks, and 47 mixed raced (Martineau 1935: 186). At this time, landholdings were still relatively small and the sugar revolution had not yet become entrenched throughout the archipelagos. Between 1662 and 1689, there was an average of 700 *engagés* living on Guadeloupe. As more estates converted from tobacco to sugar cane, the importation of enslaved labor from Africa continued to rise as did the Creole black enslaved population born and raised in the New World. Conversely, the numbers of *engagés* emigrating from France steadily declined in the next century. By December of 1697, Guadeloupe's population totaled 8,798 (3,645 whites; 4,983 blacks; 170 mulattos; Martineau 1935:191). However, despite the high representation of blacks in the Guadeloupe census, fewer enslaved Africans were sent to Guadeloupe in comparison to her sister island colonies because Saint-Domingue and Martinique were preferred destinations of the French slave trade, receiving mostly enslaved African men at the request of privileged plantation owners.

Because of this neglect, Guadeloupe, desperate for bodies, often turned to contraband sources (Butel 2002: 165; Moitt 2001: 21). Interestingly enough, in

cliometric discussions of late 17th-century slave demographics it is suggested that enslaved men outnumbered women during slavery in most parts of the Caribbean with percentages of 60 to 75 (Higman 1976: 116; Klein: 29-32; Lovejoy 1983: 62-63; Rodney 1974: 105). This assessment seems to extend into the 18th century according to David Geggus' analysis of slave ships bound for Saint-Domingue and other French Antillean ports prior to the 1760s (Geggus 2001: 122, 1989: 25-26). However, in the cases of Guadeloupe and French Guiana, primary sources seem to suggest that black women were never outnumbered by men by any significant percentage especially by the mid-to-late 18th century (Geggus 2001: 130, 1989: 25-26; Moitt 2001: 5, 8).¹³ For example, between 1671 and 1790 on Martinique and Guadeloupe, men never outnumbered women by more than 4.5% (Fallope 1992: 92; Lassere 1961 vol.1: 293). More specifically, on Guadeloupe by 1780, there were only 109 men for every 100 women (Fallope 1992: 92; Moitt 2001: 29). Some historians hypothesize that Guadeloupe's dependence on contraband slave traders, who may have transported a larger number of enslaved women than naval-regulated ships, might account for this difference (Butel 2002: 165; Moitt 2001: 21). Although historians used many of the primary sources to compile demographic information, their data only accounts for a percentage of the total population. Nevertheless, it does provide an intriguing avenue for further demographic studies.

¹³ This was certainly the case for sugar plantations. However, on coffee plantations on Guadeloupe, percentages favoured men (Vanony-Frisch 1984:3-4, 78).

While Guadeloupe appears to be a unique case in the Caribbean in terms of nearly equal sex ratios of the enslaved population, their lives under slavery were comparable to their counterparts on other islands. Slave maintenance (i.e., nourishment, healthcare, housing, etc.) was of little concern among the planters. They viewed money used to sustain their primary source of labor as cutting into their profits. This led to a continuously undernourished and overworked slave population as early as 1670 (Munford 1991 vol. 2: 534) since planters preferred to purchase new enslaved laborers to replace those who died rather than maintain the health of the slave population.

The exploitation of enslaved bodies resulted in differential gendered experiences, and women's mortality rates were affected more so than men. In her Guadeloupean survey of enslaved individuals between 1770 and 1789, historian Nicole Vanony-Frisch (1985: 63) discovered that girls tended to survive infancy and childhood more so than boys. However, between the ages of 11 and 50, the stresses of plantation life affected women more so than men, and women appeared to have a shorter lifespan (Geggus 1996: 268). This is easily understood considering the taxing and dangerous jobs women were required to perform as discussed earlier (pregnancy and childbirth also led to higher mortality rates). However, if enslaved women did live beyond age 50, they tended to live longer than men (Debien 1974: 319). This exact pattern was also present in the English islands (Dunn 2000: 332).

The Social Climate of the Late 18th and Early 19th Centuries

Despite the prosperity France enjoyed because of the sugar economy, the French Antilles were torn apart by internal and external forces throughout the 18th century and into the early decades of the 19th century. In the 18th century, Britain and France contended for North American empires, which resulted in the Seven Years War (1756-1763) during the reign of King Louis the XV. In 1758, the English seized several French colonial possessions in the Lesser Antilles, including Guadeloupe. The English invaded Guadeloupe several times, and between 1759 and 1763 they developed Pointe-à-Pitre into a major harbor for trade with English and North American markets (Martineau 1935:219). In 1763, the Treaty of Paris was signed and France recovered Martinique, Guadeloupe, and St. Lucia.

Alongside the conflicts with England, the French Antilles' changing racial and gender demographics were a cause for internal island tensions. Between 1770 and 1789 an estimated 58% of the enslaved workforce was Creole and women represented 49% of the group (Vanony-Frisch 1985: 28, 36).¹⁴ By the end of the 18th century, fewer African-born laborers were shipped to the French Antilles until France's eventual abolishment of the slave trade in 1815. Between 1780 and 1848 the proportion of enslaved laborers from Africa dropped to 14%, and the island-born

¹⁴ This definition of Creole refers to two groups. One group identified with the French racial category of *sang-mêlé*: those of mixed racial heritage, who were born on the islands and had European ancestry. This group represented just over 14% of the total population. The second group consisted of *créole noir*, those born on the islands of either one or two African parents, between 1770 and 1789 (Vanony-Frisch 1985: 28).

enslaved laborers constituted the majority throughout the islands (Fallope 1996: 163). In contrast, the white inhabitants, the *grand* and *petits blancs*, the racial minority, made up only 13% of the population, and the remaining 3% were free people of color known as *gens de couleur* (Martineau 1935: 200).¹⁵ The *gens de couleur* began to voice their demand for political and economic equality. For although they made up a small percentage of the total population, they were 22% of the free population, and many owned property and were accustomed to a certain amount of privilege and freedom. Influenced by the ideals of the Enlightenment and well aware of the brewing concerns of the bourgeoisie in France, the *gens de couleur* found themselves struggling against racial barriers to attain the privileges of citizenship.

By 1789, France's Old World order, the *ancien régime*, was drawing to a close. France's rising tensions with itself would cause an implosion through two revolutions: first, at the metropole from 1789-1799, which significantly affected the white island colonists, and soon to follow, on Saint Domingue from 1791-1804, a war that would affect all racial and social groups. During the French Revolution the monarchy was overthrown and the Roman Catholic Church imposed radical societal restructuring upon all French subjects. Several factors including the resentment of royal absolutism, resentment of the seigneurial system by peasants and the rising bourgeoisie would prove to be a catalyst for violent contestation overseas. Political

¹⁵ *Gens de couleur* was originally a French social status, and the term was coined by Moreau de Saint-Méry in the late 18th century. It distinguished a person from white (*blanc*) or black (*noir*) and later, it would preclude a racial signifier as well.

and economic stress was growing throughout the French islands although it manifested first and most violently in Saint Domingue (see discussion of Haitian Revolution further below). In general, the aristocratic planters in the French West Indies were angered by “ministerial despotism”, France’s constant interference with island administration without the benefit of colonial representation in the metropole (Fick 1990: 76-77). The planters demanded the right to internal legislation. At the same time, *gens de couleur* expressed many similar sentiments as the rising white bourgeoisie and began to use force to assert their rights for citizenship and equality. These racial and class conflicts placed them at odds with the *petits blancs* and the *grands blancs*. However, the *gens de couleur* were not the only non-white group engaged in a struggle for greater equality. The enslaved population, enduring a similar kind of seigneurial system, was tired of severe ill treatment and exploitation. Thus, they too began to show signs of rebellion (Fick 1990: 238).

At the end of the 18th century, radical social and political upheavals that occurred in Saint Domingue and in France were compounded by the invasion of Guadeloupe and Martinique by the English during the Napoleonic wars. These disruptions caused labor unrest and financial crisis for the sugar, coffee, cotton and indigo industries (Klein 1986: 108). Most likely in response to the English acquisition of the islands, France abolished slavery and the slave trade in 1794 on Guadeloupe and Martinique only. However, England was still invested in slave-related ventures throughout the Caribbean and, therefore, blacks in Martinique were still enslaved. In

contrast, on Guadeloupe the combination of a rebel black population and a French force under the leadership of Victor Hugues successfully struggled against British invasion by the end of 1792. This then placed Guadeloupean black communities in an unstable position of quasi-freedom for a short time (Klein 1986: 109; Moitt 2001: 127).

To add to an already volatile social situation between the free residents in the French islands, there was the social position of the enslaved community as colonial subjects. The highly charged social and racial arena that arose in the latter half of the 17th century between the planter class and the enslaved laborers did not diminish during the 18th and 19th centuries as the black Creole population grew. Fearing the possibility of another Saint Domingue, Napoleon sent his army to re-impose slavery and the slave trade in Guadeloupe in 1802. By 1815, after the Napoleonic wars, Martinique and Guadeloupe were restored to France (Marshall 2005: 78; Klein 1986: 109).

In the first two decades of the 19th century, Guadeloupe's enslaved community was quite large, and estimated at just over 80,000. They represented the majority of the total population by percentage, but their livelihood was not a central concern for the slave-holding class (Curtin 1969: 78). At the insistence of the colonial administrators, planters took measures to ensure the safety of the white population. However, it was at the cost of enslaved laborers who were still over-exploited and

subjected to an inhumane regime of coercion and punishment. Even general provisions for the enslaved laborers' daily sustenance were a somewhat marginal consideration for the planters. However, the descendants of imported Africans continued to survive by adapting, resisting and ultimately negotiating their positions in the slave-based economy and society of the French Caribbean. Resistance was articulated in a variety of ways: maroonage, revolts, retention of African religions and other cultural practices, participation in the internal economy of the island markets, laboring as skilled artisans, etc. The delicate balance of resistance and accommodation over the centuries resulted in the formation of an African-based, yet new Caribbean identity that was distinct from that of the European-descended population (Chamoiseau and Confiant 1991:29, 46; Chamoiseau et al. 1997: 144). Not only did the enslaved population begin to reflect a more *creolized* community as opposed to the previous century in which the enslaved community was dominated by the influx of enslaved Africans, but the sex ratio of enslaved laborers were nearly equalled in Guadeloupe with a steady increase of female babies being born. Further, during the first three decades of the 19th century, sex ratios fell in favor of women on Guadeloupe (Fallope 1992: 93; Moitt 2001: 30).¹⁶ Women came to represent the greatest numbers of the plantation workforce, a trend observed in Martinique and French Guiana during that same period (Ibid.). Historian Josette Fallope suggests that

¹⁶ Between 1780 and 1804, the proportionate number of males steadily decreased from 109 men to 107 men for every 100 women. This trend continued with 95 men for every 100 women in 1823 and decreased to 91 men to 100 women by 1836 (Fallope 1992: 93, 376).

this trend was relatively consistent throughout the first half of the 19th century suggesting a more creolized and feminized culture in Guadeloupe that organically and violently contested the moral, religious, and economic justifications for slavery through *marronage* and slave insurgencies.

As stated previously, by the beginning of the 19th century, Guadeloupe's enslaved community began to reflect a more creolized identity as opposed to the previous century when the importation of enslaved Africans was higher. Between 1816 and 1848 the enslaved population of Guadeloupe was only in the tens of thousands, composed mostly of Creole blacks (Curtin 1969: 78; Filostrate 2008: 29; Schoelcher 1976: 24).¹⁷ Yet, the enslaved population continuously outnumbered whites at least four to one (Martineau 1935: 194).

Guadeloupe's growing creolized community became less tolerant of the conditions of slavery and the lack of social and economic freedom that was available for the free people of color. Inspired by the French bourgeoisie's call for liberty and equality back in France, Saint Domingue became the colonial powder keg for a three-way conflict between planters, free people of color and the enslaved community. The planters' desires for independence from France, the *gens de couleur's* demand for full citizenship, versus the slaves' need for freedom ignited and exploded into what is now referred to as the Haitian Revolution. Elsewhere throughout the French Antilles,

¹⁷ According to Frank D. Lewis (2004:152), his *Tableau de Relevés de Population: 1839-1860* shows that Guadeloupe's 19th-century slave population never reached 100,000.

the slave insurrection in Saint Domingue stirred overwhelming fears in French planters and greater hope in the enslaved communities. These actions, coupled with Britain's consistent military pressure to acquire French Antillean colonies, stretched France's grip on the islands. In January of 1793, Guadeloupe began its own revolution. Over 250 enslaved from plantations in southern Basse-Terre took up arms and marched against royalist planters allied with the English. By April 20, the revolution took a violent turn due to the massacre of colonists at Trois-Rivières (Butel 2002: 240). Martinique and Guadeloupe (briefly) fell under British occupation until Victor Hugues arrived to dispossess England of the islands. In an effort to avoid the potential of more slave insurrections, a declaration was passed for the abolition of slavery in all French colonies except Martinique (which was still under English occupation) in 1794. All men, despite color distinctions ("sans distinction de couleur"), would be considered citizens of France (Martineau 1935: 93).

The political, social, and economic system of the *ancien régime* waned dramatically during the first decades of the 19th century. Between 1810 and 1816, England continued to press its advantage on the overstressed military forces in the Lesser Antilles for occupation of Guadeloupe until the Treaty of Vienna restored the island to France, which has maintained sovereignty over it since 1816 (Martineau 1935:98). The substantial loss of Saint Domingue—France's most productive Caribbean colony—had economically weakened France which never returned to dominate colonial exports to Europe.

Although slavery was reinstated to Guadeloupe in 1802, the impact of the Haitian Revolution inspired international antislavery movements. The French abolished their slave trade in 1818. Federal processes began efforts to assimilate men of color into the white body politic in 1830. The period of 1815 to 1848 was marked by a slow evolution of public opinion in France in favor of the final abolition of slavery. However, the idea was not embraced by the white planters and *gens de couleur* who owned slaves for fear that the economic reformation would ruin their fortunes (Butel 2002:280; Martineau 1935: 217). While the number of freed blacks (*affranchis*) grew everyday it did not bring blacks and whites closer through common interests.

Guadeloupe did not fare well in economic terms in the final years of slavery. The year 1830 marked Guadeloupe's sugar crisis when sugar prices began to fall, affecting production and the *sucreries* themselves. In the 1830s there were 620 *sucreries*, but by 1847 they had decreased to 530 (Butel 2002: 259). While sugar cultivation was on the decline, social tensions were not overtly affected. In fact, the number of freed men of color was growing without causing violent clashes between the races. Still, abolitionists rallied for the end of slavery. French politician Victor Schoelcher published *l'Abolition de l'Esclavage* in 1840 campaigning for the abolition of slavery that led to two petitions of 1844 signed for the emancipation of slaves (Martineau 1935:104-105). Less than five years later, France abolished

slavery on March 4, 1848 (Martineau 1935:108), finally bringing about the end of the *ancien régime*.

Post-Emancipation Labor

After 1848, newly freed blacks were able to leave the plantations and become farmers on small-scale properties where land was not already cultivated for sugar. Fearing that the lack of a reliable workforce would cripple the plantation economy, planters desperately sought alternative sources from abroad. In the years following emancipation, as many as 50,000 immigrants arrived in Guadeloupe to work on the plantations.¹⁸ While most arrived after a negotiation for indentured servitude, many were brought illegally. In an effort to continue using a racially similar workforce as that used during slavery, an additional 12,000-18,000 enslaved Africans illegally entered Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guiana after 1850 (Fallope 1992: 370). Participation in the slave trade was a criminal act and punishment was enforced, encouraging plantation owners to seek other sources of labor. A Franco-British treaty of July 9, 1861, authorized the French to draw workers from the British territories of

¹⁸ Interestingly enough, Indian immigration to the islands had begun eight years prior to the signing of the treaty. On December 24, 1854, Guadeloupe received its first non-European/non-African indentured workers: 344 Indians. Many came from ex-French colonies such as Union Territory Pondicherry in Southern India as well as Kolkata, West Bengal India (Fallope 1992:370- 371). There are various South Asian estimation discrepancies between authors. For example, Deena (2009: 4) estimated 22,000 Indians arrived before the end of the 19th century while Schnepel (2004) calculated numbers as high as 45,000 based on works by Guy Lassere (1953) and Singaravelou (1975).

India which allowed them to increase the recruitment of Indian workers.¹⁹ The choice of specific Indian territories was supposedly influenced by racial ideologies and beginning in 1855, and a few hundred Chinese and Vietnamese laborers were also brought to Guadeloupe (Fallope 1992: 371).²⁰ Between 1854 and 1889, 42,500 Indians and several hundred Chinese and Vietnamese laborers immigrated to the archipelagos.

Originally, East Indian settlements in Guadeloupe were associated with sugar plantations. If they were not directly living in the areas once known as the slave village, most likely they dwelt in areas adjacent to them, and lived in residents similar to those of their black counterparts. The East Indians worked and often lived among blacks and adapted to the centuries-old division of labor on the plantation. This was most certainly the case at La Mahaudière. While the plantation previously operated with hundreds of Creole blacks, as many as 60 Tamil indentured workers became part of the plantation workforce (Vragar 2002: 14). However, while the South Asian indentured workers shared many occupational experiences with Creole blacks in Guadeloupe, they were not immediately a cohesive labor force, choosing to remain socially and ethnically apart. For instance, the Indian immigrants maintained a positive relationship with the white administrators. This placed them at odds with the

¹⁹ The last group of East Indian immigrants landed in Guadeloupe in 1889.

²⁰ Although East Indian immigrants came from diverse cultural, geographical and religious backgrounds, the common link was their darker skin. Naïve in their hypothesis, French officials believed that because of the East Indians' pigmentation, the new laborers would blend in with the local black population (Schnepel 2004: 45).

blacks who vied for control over provision grounds, and who negotiated formal contracts that specified wage fees and for shorter work days that gave them time to engage in other activities that helped to raise their standard of living (Fallope: 395-398; Schnepel 2004: 46; Tomich 1995: 247, 251-252). While their numbers kept them as a minority in Guadeloupe, they became fully integrated participants of Guadeloupe's politics, economics, and social life; their presence had a profound effect on the evolving complexity of the archipelagos' social and racial landscapes (Fallope 1992: 370; Schnepel 2004: 46).

The next section will focus on enslaved women's experiences in the French West Indies. Although both enslaved African women and men endured many of the same conditions associated with plantation life, I will highlight enslaved women's responses to slavery via their gender roles in colonial slave society.

Enslaved Women's Experiences

Despite black women's position as the lowest subordinate in colonial society, a truer representation of culture and history of the French West Indies must include greater attention to their experiences. As stated earlier in this chapter, unlike other plantation societies in the Caribbean, black women in Guadeloupe were never outnumbered by men by any significant percentage between the late 17th century and

the mid-to-late 18th century. In the decades that transitioned into the 19th century on Guadeloupe, sex ratios became equal and eventually fell in favor of women who then represented the majority of the plantation workforce before emancipation (Fallope 1992: 163-165). The demographic rise in the number of females on Guadeloupean plantations is believed to have been a result of the growing numbers of descendants of the Creole slave community rather than the importation of newly enslaved Africans (Gautier 1985: 273; e.g. Vanony-Frisch 1985: 28, 94).²¹ That is, more enslaved females were being born on the island. However, unlike most plantations, La Mahaudière's slave demographics did not mirror the trend. According to Heather Gibson's research on the 1796 Census for Anse-Berland commune, women did not outnumber men in any age category (Gibson 2007: 51).

Despite the growing feminization of the plantation workforce, the colonial view of enslaved women was ambivalent. By virtue of their sex, women (with few exceptions) were not allowed to participate in most skilled and semi-skilled labor. The gendered division of plantation labor relegated enslaved African women to the bottom of the work hierarchy. As part of the field gangs, not even pregnant or nursing women were exempt from hard labor. High infant mortality and low fertility rates indicate the high level of physical and emotional stress experienced by enslaved women. The extreme work conditions, which disproportionately affected women,

²¹ Between 1776 and 1789 an estimated 20% of enslaved workers (1,836) were African born and of this group 56% were male and almost 44% were female (Vanony-Frisch 1985:28).

coupled with their roles in reproduction resulted in uniquely gendered experiences. This included also their sexual exploitation which I will discuss later in this chapter. Even in the case of discipline and punishment, while men and women were subjected to them equally, the effects were experienced differently across gender lines.

Discipline

Like men, women also experienced harsh whippings and various forms of torture. Enslaved men and women alike were subject to violent treatment regardless of whether the women were pregnant or recovering from maternity care (Gisler 1981: 140; Peytraud 1897: 327-329; Schoelcher 1976: 90-110). The *Code Noir*'s specifics on punishment made no gender exemptions for women nor did any French law before the abolishment of slavery in 1848. Although punishment was doled to enslaved women and men, especially to those who participated in revolts and insurrections, the acts of resistance and violence against the colonial powers often assumed gender specific roles. For example, colonial records acknowledged poisoning as an act of resistance by the enslaved community since the onset of the African slaves' arrival to the islands (Peytraud 1897: 28). Poison, in most cases, was supposedly used against animals and other enslaved rather than the slave owners. In the French Antilles, the threat of poison by women struck more fear in the minds of whites than the possibility of slave revolts orchestrated by men. While knowledge of an imminent

attack against colonists could be confronted openly with enough time for a counter attack, the act of poisoning was a powerful form of resistance because it was a covert act. In most recorded cases, black women were held accountable for poisoning (e.g., Debien 2000: 405-408; Fick 1990: 37-39; Gisler 1981: 108; James 1938: 23; Moitt 2001: 139-146). Thus, the threat of poisoning left planters and their families feeling vulnerable even in their own homes since enslaved women were ever-present.

While colonial law did not provide any special breaks for women condoned to punishment, there is some evidence that gender was often a factor in *how* punishment was received. Historian Bernard Moitt states that:

“...slave women, being more directly in the line of confrontation with the slave system than men due to their subordinate position within the slave occupational hierarchy, were apt to be punished more frequently and, quite often, with more venom” (2001: 101).

Such a situation of extreme punishment against women has been documented at La Mahaudière. The 1840 case known as the Affaire Douillard-Mahaudière was championed as a litigation precedent by abolitionists to promote the effacement of slavery (Schoelcher 1976:33-34). In this highly publicized case involving the proprietor of the plantation, Jean-Baptiste Douillard-Mahaudière, formal charges were brought against Douillard-Mahaudière for the extreme punishment of an enslaved woman, Lucile (Gibson 2007: 113). According to records, Lucile was

accused of several acts of poisoning and kept bound in chains in a cramped, dark, prison-like dwelling on the plantation property for 22 months without adequate food and water.²² Official action was required because Douillard-Mahaudière's punishment surpassed the legal extremity of discipline allowed by the *Code Noir*. However, Douillard-Mahaudière was acquitted, thereby reinforcing the overwhelming colonial hierarchy of power that slave owners possessed over their enslaved laborers.

While the presence of enslaved African women on the plantation landscape has never been in question, their importance and contribution to the plantation economy has been largely obscured. Having discussed the burden of plantation fieldwork and the severity of discipline black women experienced, I now explore enslaved women's strategies to ensure individual and community survival, as well as their role in the formation of African Guadeloupean Creole society and culture.

Enslaved Women's Agency: Strategies in the Slave Quarters

Enslaved Africans relied upon their slave quarters as a space for exerting some control over their lives. Most often, enslaved women opted to manage daily activities that preserved and enriched the lives of themselves and their families. Away from the eyes of the slave owners and the plantation management, enslaved men and

²² This dwelling is known as a *cachot* in French (Schoelcher 1976: 34).

women articulated agency and cultural creativity through music, dance, storytelling and religious practice. When not encumbered from the long hours of fieldwork, enslaved women throughout the Caribbean and the American South also had the responsibility of traditional domestic pursuits such as raising children, caring for the sick and cooking food for their families.

Enslaved women frequently labored to improve their material conditions through food-based activities. The management of personal slave gardens, provisional communal grounds, raising pigs and occasionally poultry, and the foraging and hunting for wild species were activities that took up an extensive amount of women's free time (David 1990; Mintz and Hall 1960; Tobin 1999; Walvin 1996: 43; Yentch 1994: 213). As I've stated earlier, food shortages caused by natural disasters, the ban of food imports during times of war, and the general selfishness of planters all contributed to the poor state of slave nourishment throughout the centuries in the French West Indies. Reports filed as late as the 19th century stated that merely one-sixth of the enslaved population was fed adequately through plantation rations (Fallope 1992: 107). Enslaved blacks, therefore, were largely responsible for their own sustenance. They sought to add more nutritional value and diversity to their diets to compensate for the sparse, monotonous provisions supplied by the planters (see Chapters 5 and 6 for more in-depth discussions on this topic).

Slave Markets

Outside the slave quarters and plantation crop fields, enslaved women provided significant contributions to the plantation economy as well as to the social and cultural history of Guadeloupe. Through their expertise of subsistence strategies, black women engaged successfully in the domestic food economy for the entire French colonial communities via local slave markets. As market women, their economic activities were sanctioned by the slave owner despite their forbiddance in the *Code Noir*.

The local markets yielded two effects. First, with erratic and undependable ship imports from Europe, especially during times of war, the enslaved women's savviness and successful harvests from their gardens and provision grounds resulted in an internal island market system that became central to the livelihood of white colonists as well. The enslaved women who ran the markets had a virtual monopoly on the internal market, making most whites of all classes either partially or completely dependent on general foodstuffs grown often by black women. Second, profits from the markets provided black women with the ability to circumvent their subordinate situations within the slave system by gaining access to goods, money, and mobility otherwise unavailable. Historian Dale Tomich (2000b: 754) noted that enslaved women's "initiative led to the development of new economic and social patterns and the mobilization of productive forces that otherwise would have

remained dormant.” In general, the surplus of their gardens and control of the internal markets provided enslaved women with a small level of independence not possible for others within the slave community.

Sexual Exploitation

As stated earlier, in a slave society race, class, and gender differentiation were more polarized, relegating enslaved women to the most subordinated positions of all (Debien 1962: 30; Geggus 1996: 265; Garraway 2005: 203; Moitt 2001: 8; Patterson 1982: 215). While generally devalued, the unbalanced sex ratio of French colonial society made her sexual presence more visible. Although there were few black women in the colonies throughout the 17th century, white women settling in the French Antilles were even rarer. Colonial administrators, aware of the greater availability of black versus white women in terms of sexual access, became extremely concerned with racial mixing.

As it was in other colonial societies in the New World, France’s maintenance of white supremacy depended upon hierarchical descriptions of skin color variations and racialized definitions of social positions.²³ In the colonial social structure of race,

²³ French administrator Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry’s late 18th century, highly detailed color/race chart (written over 12 pages) of the French Antilles was ultimately created to posit all the racial mixing possibilities and their supposed behavioral attributes to support racial hierarchy for social control (Moreau de Saint-Méry 1958 vol. 1: 86-101).

which was crosscut by gender and status, one of the dominant representations of enslaved women caste them as sexual objects. While enslaved men and women were unequal to whites, black women had the added and horrific burden of also being sexual subordinates to white men. Black women were the victims of unwanted sexual advances from any white male working on the plantation, from overseers to the master planter himself. Enslaved women had no rights and legal recourse and were often the victims of rape and other forms of sexual coercion. Moreover, black women were blamed for their victimization. According to Doris Garraway (2005: 203), colonial discourses “attributed an illicit agency to slave women, abiding in their sexual offerings to those in power”, thus, positioning white men, even slave owners, as passive and non-aggressive. Despite their oppression and lack of legal power, black women were nonetheless regarded as deviant and abusers of sexual power over white men (Moitt 2001: 99; Garraway 2005: 203). Thus, black women were denounced as black sexual savages, which served as further justification for colonial powers to maintain absolute control over their bodies (Garraway 2005: 204).

Enslaved status and race differentiation and, therefore, social control over black women’s bodies was first and most successfully codified by the *Code Noir*. This royal set of laws, created in 1685, specified the institutional practices of slavery. Two

articles that pertain to the gender and status of black women were articles 12 and 13.

They state:

- **Article XII.** Children born from marriages between slaves shall be slaves, and if the husband and wife have different masters, they shall belong to the masters of the female slave, not to the master of her husband.
- **Article XIII.** We desire that if a male slave has married a free woman, their children, either male or female, shall be free as is their mother, regardless of their father's condition of slavery. *And if the father is free and the mother a slave, the children shall also be slaves.* . . . [author's emphasis]

What is most illuminating is that Article 13 decrees that the condition of slavery would be passed through the mother solely, thus, allowing white men to sexually exploit enslaved women, condemning any offspring from the rape to a life of slavery. Ownership of black women's bodies guaranteed the ownership of any children born from those bodies. However, the *Code Noir* endeavored to control the potential of racial and class divisions by monitoring the interactions of free men of color with enslaved women. Article 9 states that any free man of color who produces offspring with an enslaved woman (that he owns) shall receive a large fine and the child and the enslaved woman were to be removed from his ownership. However, where French single men were concerned, religion, and more specifically, the Catholic Church's promotion of the sanctity of family, could supercede the concerns raised in other parts of the *Code Noir*. For example, the second section of the article required a

legalized marriage ceremony between French single men and their enslaved African concubines.

Officials in the metropole and colonial administrators made various efforts to reduce the frequency of white/black social and sexual interactions. Indentureship contracts were shortened and white indentures were promised greater economic prosperity after their service had been fulfilled to entice more white women to immigrate to the islands (Satineau 1928:98). Moreover, several royal ordinances passed in the late 17th century endeavored to keep a racial balance between numbers of *engagés* and the enslaved (Moitt 2001: 11). However, the drive for crop production required the necessity of more slave labor which marked the end of the *engagé* period.

The sexual allure of black women was a continuous concern throughout the colonial period, enough so that an Anti-Negro law of 1773 was passed and sent to the Caribbean administrators. The decree stated the necessity for social distance between whites and black and free women of color. Even marriage to a black or biracial woman “tainted” the white man and, therefore, he could not hold military titles or any significant position in the colony (Abanime 1979: 21). However, as various colonial demographic records reveal, the mixed race population continuously grew and formed a significant portion of French colonial society—always outnumbering whites—despite royal ordinances and social pressures to discourage white men’s

sexual interactions with black women (e.g., Garraway 2005: 208-209; Lacour 1976: 385).

Conclusion

Although French colonization of the Caribbean began with few enslaved Africans, the potential of profits from sugar cane cultivation rationalized larger-scale participation in the slave trade. Still, even in small numbers during the 17th century, black women contributed to colonial society through their enforced labor, and in terms of their own communities, via their household work and cultural practices. As more and more enslaved Africans were brought to the French Antilles throughout the *ancien régime* and afterward, the French attempted to disempower and demoralize women, and proscribed them to the most subordinate positions.

Gender variously played a role in the division of field and domestic labor. While women had to work the fields alongside men, requiring rigorous strength and energy, the French considered them too inferior for skilled domestic and industrial labor. Furthermore, women's bodies held such little moral and monetary value (save for in the reproduction of the slave labor force) in the French colonial context that they were solely responsible for the most dangerous job on plantations: feeding cane through the mill. Moreover, black women were also victims of sexual and reproductive exploitation. Though enslaved women treasured their offspring, the

physical strain of childbearing coupled with poor diet and healthcare, and extreme labor demands, resulted in high infant mortality rates and shortened their lifespan.

Yet, despite these gender-specific burdens, history has demonstrated the various ways in which women did practice acts of resistance. Women, alongside men, participated in insurrections and revolts during revolutionary wars (Moitt 1996: 241-242). They were also viewed as a threat for their potential to covertly poison whites, and as a result, were disproportionately blamed and punished for poisoning. Still, it was their contributions to everyday cultural and social practices that often went unnoticed, but nonetheless helped to ensure the livelihood of their families and communities. According to black feminist and *créolité* theories, these, too, were covert acts of resistance as women worked against the tide of oppression to carve out some autonomous spaces within which their communities could forge a sense of collective identity through shared practices (see Chapter 2).

While this chapter has surveyed the history of plantation slavery in the French West Indies, I have also sought to emphasize the French colonization of Guadeloupe in particular. Furthermore, my discussion of plantation slavery emphasized black women's participation in the crop economies of the Caribbean islands since the beginning of French colonization, including women's economic autonomy through subsistence practices and their control of the internal market system. Due to the planters' negligence of their responsibility to provide adequate nourishment for the

slave community, enslaved women had to engage in various subsistence activities to provide food for their families. This was in addition to their arduous labors in the fields that supplied sugar to Europe and profit for the French planters. Through calculation, perseverance, and some level of negotiation with planters, black women fought to survive and prosper under the constraints of slavery and were indispensable to the French Antillean domestic economy. Black women's place was cemented in the colonial setting by their substantial contributions to the livelihood of the French Antillean communities and prevented the island societies from economic collapse. Control of the internal markets provided women with economic and social networks and semi-independence that ultimately led to a new and creolized identity during slavery and afterwards. It is this significant role of enslaved women in foodways, both within the domestic and public spheres, that provides the rationale for my focus on foodways.

Next, I provide a historical background of Habitation La Mahaudière as a case study in the French Antillean's participation in slavery and sugar cultivation. The zooarchaeological data that forms one of my major lines of evidence for foodways was recovered from this site. The following focuses on the evidence of the site drawn from historical records. The archaeological investigations are discussed in Chapter 4.

Habitation La Mahaudière- A Case Study

Habitation La Mahaudière is a well-preserved plantation currently owned by the local government known as the Conseil Régional Général de La Guadeloupe. It is located in the commune Anse-Bertrand in the northeast area of Grande Terre island, north of the town of Le Moule (Figure 3.1). The plantation site roughly encompasses one hectare (Kelly 2003c) and sits on a low-lying ridge.

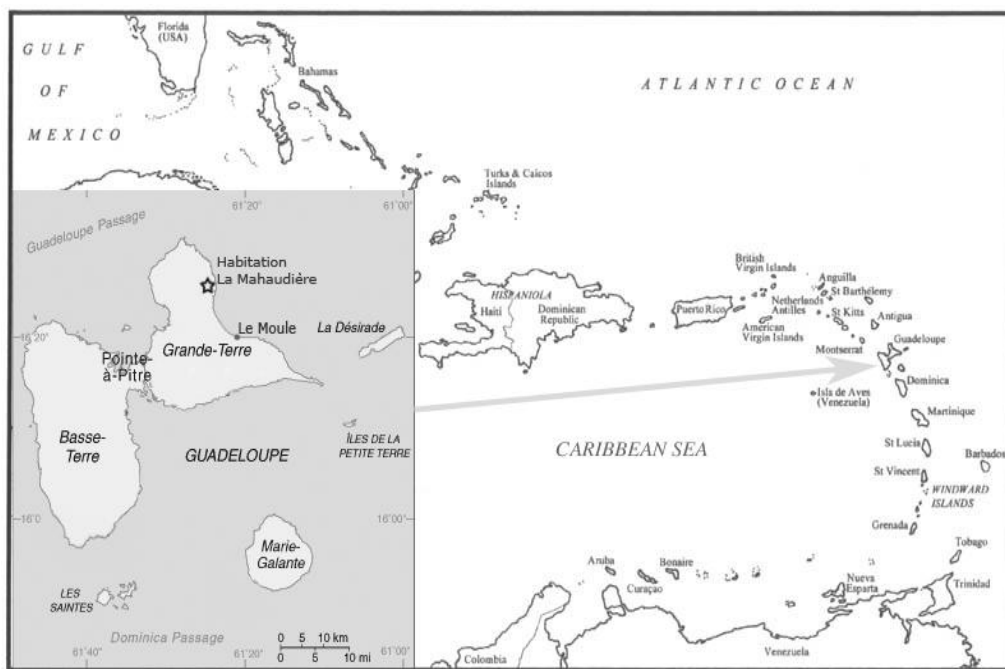


Figure 3.1: Area map of Guadeloupe and location of Habitation La Mahaudière on Grande Terre, north of the Le Moule. (Images used with online permission from University of Texas Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/cia06/guadeloupe_sm_2006)

To better inform our survey of the plantation, we searched for historic maps that would help detail the spatial organization of the slave village. Unlike some

Anglophone islands such as Jamaica and Barbados, there appears to be no estate plans linked to the era of slavery that are known to exist at present in the Archives Départementales of Guadeloupe or elsewhere (Kelly 2001). However, there is the map *Plan de L'isle Grande Terre Guadeloupe* of 1732 by François Marie Amaudric de Sainte Maure that shows the plantation, as well as a series of maps commissioned by the French king between 1764-1768 called the *Carte des Ingénieurs du Roi* (CIR), that detail the division of all plantation properties of the archipelagos, including La Mahaudière (Figure 3.2). While we may not possess any estate plans of La Mahaudière, we at least know that the plantation was in existence by the 1760s as evidenced on the CIR.



Figure 3.2: The Commune of Anse-Bertrand, Grande Terre on the *Carte des Ingénieurs du Roi* (CIR) map (circa 1760s). Habitation La Mahaudière is indicated to the right of the white arrow as “M. Mahaudière”.

Anse-Bertrand Historical Context and La Mahaudière History

Besides the CIR indicating Habitation La Mahaudière’s temporal and spatial context, scholars have been able to assemble some additional historical background information. In 2000, the Conseil Général implemented a project to explore the

history of the site (Vragar 2002: 3) for the eventual historic interpretation to the public. At the beginning of colonization on Grande-Terre, sugar cane cultivation was active at that time but only as a minor crop in the commune of Anse-Bertrand. Rather, tobacco, indigo, and cotton farms dominated the region. Moreover, there were only five plantations with sugar works on Grande Terre in 1732 (Juraver and Eclar 1992: 16). But sugar cane's inferior position in the economic market was soon to change. Although sugar cane cultivation only occupied 14.7 % of cultivated land on Grande Terre, by 1790 there were over 21 sugar works associated with plantations in the Anse-Bertrand commune, demonstrating how quickly sugar cane cultivation rose in popularity (Juraver and Eclar 1992: 16-17).

While the CIR map does indicate the Mahaudière property, scholars were able to delve further back into the history of the plantation. There is evidence to show that the land was already functioning as a farm several decades earlier. Official plans of an earlier land survey of Grande Terre reveals that this piece of land, currently known as the La Mahaudière plantation, was owned by the Boishnormand family during the early part of the 18th century (Vragar 2002: 4). The property maintained several buildings or structures, suggesting that it was a working farm. It is unclear what crop was grown on the property during this time, and thus its economic contribution to Grande Terre remains a mystery.

At some point before the creation of the CIR map, the property exchanged hands. The new owner reported by secondary sources was Jean-Baptiste Douillard-Mahaudière. By 1768, the CIR maps (Figure 3.3) show the site's windmill and a slave village, which affirms that the site functioned as a plantation by that time (FLOHIC 1992). Despite the social and political disruptions brought by British invasion in the last decade of the 18th century, La Mahaudière appears to have functioned effectively with laborers that were legally free because of France's temporary abolishment of slavery and the slave trade. A census record for the year 1796 details an approximate number of 176 workers at La Mahaudière (Gibson 2007: 150), suggesting that this plantation was slightly larger than average for the 18th century (see Debien 2000:95; Lasserre 1961: 354-355). While names were not recorded, gender, age and job description (field, artisan, or domestic) were listed (Gibson 2007:150). The majority of the enslaved labor force, 103 individuals, was employed as *cultivateur* for fieldwork, while eight worked as domestics and two were skilled as wet coopers. The census also documented those not involved in labor due to their age (i.e., children) as well as those incapacitated due to illness (Ibid.).



Figure 3.3: Close-up of the 1760s *Carte des Ingénieurs du Roi* (CIR) map showing structures on Habitation La Mahaudière.

By 1810, notary records show that the property was owned by the widow Mahaudière and her two sons, Pierre and Jean-Baptiste Douillard Mahaudière. In 1812, the two brothers created the company Douillard Mahaudière Brothers with Pierre holding the position as head administrator (Vragar 2002: 7). The property was sold a few times although it always remained in the Mahaudière family. For example, the property was briefly sold to another member of the family, but by 1828 it was sold back to Jean-Baptiste and remained under his direction as late as 1840.

Currently, the available historical information about La Mahaudière focuses on the size and prosperity of the plantation. At the time of the census (1818-1836), La

Mahaudière was one of 24 sugar plantations in the bourg of Anse-Bertrand (Schnakenbourg 1980: 34) and probably one of the largest. At best, a 19th-century inventory merely alludes to the size of the slave population on the plantation. The 1824 inventory of the Douillard Mahaudière Brothers Company shows that the number of enslaved field laborers for the plantation was estimated at 146 with at least 30 houses for residential purposes (Vragar 2002:13, 17). When compared to the Census of 1796's estimate of 103 field workers, the 1824 inventory demonstrates that the plantation managed to prosper and grow in size, despite the instability of its ownership during the first decades of the 19th century.

While the Conseil Général's historical report of the site does include some notary minutes, general maps, inventories, and mortgage documentations, little to nothing is known about everyday life at the plantation. At present it is not known how personal and professional relationships were maintained between field workers, servants, managers, and the planter (Vragar 2002: 5). Plantation inventories are typically restricted to listing property, and family diaries, papers, and plans either did not exist or were most likely lost in the fire of 1871 (Vragar 2002: 6). Thus, all questions related to the social relationships, not to mention cultural practices, of those who lived at La Mahaudière remain unaddressed in the documentary record.

After the abolition of slavery in 1848, competing prices for sugar throughout the Caribbean and Europe chipped away at the French Antillean plantation industry.

La Mahaudière was one of the remaining 21 plantations to continue harvesting and processing sugar cane on Grande Terre (Juraver and Eclar 1992: 16-17). The plantation's owners first employed newly freed black and Creole laborers only. However, emancipation and the choice to leave plantations led to a lack of a reliable workforce for the plantation economy and planters sought alternative labor from India. By 1860, at the request of the widowed Madame Etienne Douillard Mahaudière, 20 Tamil indentured workers became part of the workforce, with the anticipation to bring another 40 from the Asia (Vragar 2002: 14). The Indian workers worked with the free black workers and even established residences within the area once known as the slave village, providing a more complex social and cultural landscape at La Mahaudière. The *sucre* and plantation eventually fell out of family possession by 1881 and were sold to a Mr. Diot (Juraver and Eclar 1992: 42).

Despite the paucity of information on daily life and general workings, the history of Habitation La Mahaudière offers rich and significant views into its place in Guadeloupe's past and in the greater scheme of French Antillean slavery. Habitation La Mahaudière characterizes the history of Guadeloupe's sugar boom. The growth of the plantation from a medium-size farm to one of the largest plantations in Anse-Bertrand commune by the early 19th century appears to exemplify historian Dale Tomich's correlation theory between plantation size and racial violence as exemplified by the 1840 Affaire Douillard-Mahaudière (see discussion earlier in this chapter for the specifics). That incident provided a compelling and controversial

example of a form of gendered and racialized social control that further problematized slavery throughout the French territories and France, while simultaneously elevating the abolitionists' fight to dismantle the institution (Fallope 1992: 312; Schoelcher 1976: 33-39). After 1848, the loss of plantation workers compelled La Mahaudière and many other plantations to introduce an alternative labor supply from Southeast Asia. Although we know that Tamil indentured laborers were small in numbers at the plantation, working amongst the black Creole free laborers, we do not know how socially cohesive both groups were while living within the slave village. However, it is for certain that in the greater social scheme of Guadeloupe's cultural life, Asian immigrants have made a substantial contribution that still enriches the ever-evolving social landscape.

Remarks

As I stated earlier, little is known about the everyday life at Habitation La Mahaudière based on the existing historical record.²⁴ Thus, archaeology presented the best potential for addressing questions regarding enslaved lifeways, including foodways and market participation. While exploring how enslaved African women through foodways played a central role in the emergence of African Guadeloupean identity, the influx of South Asian indentured servants after 1848 did complicate my

²⁴ The family archival documents were lost in a fire in 1871 (Vrager 2002: 6).

investigation of foodways and identity. To distinguish social and ethnic variabilities in the archaeological record proved to be a difficult task.

In the next chapter I discuss the excavations at La Mahaudière from 2001-2005, including the field methods and sampling procedures used, and the site layout and general descriptions of excavated units and features. I focus on the features and artifacts that were most relevant to my own research on foodways, including the ceramic evidence and use of yardspace.

Chapter IV: Archaeological Research at La Mahaudière

As the last chapter presented what is known from documentary sources regarding Habitation La Mahaudière on Grande Terre, and situated the plantation within French Antillean history, I now present the archaeological project and field procedures in order to contextualize the archaeological data of this research. Kenneth G. Kelly of the Department of Anthropology at the University of South Carolina initiated and directed the archaeological surveys and excavations of La Mahaudière during summer sessions from 2001-2005. Excavations at La Mahaudière included testing within and around several slave dwellings to understand the lifespan of certain portions of the slave village via an assessment of the artifact distributions, construction methods, changes in architectural style, and uses of space. To assist in our understanding of the role of foodways in the lives of enslaved Africans, I focus on the excavation strategies that were employed to delineate how the yard spaces around the slave homes were used for food-related activities, and I offer interpretations of the consumption patterns across time and space.

Site Description

Habitation La Mahaudière is located in the Grande Terre commune of Anse-Bertrand, on a unique monticule overlooking sugar cane fields, which provides

substantial views of the surrounding landscape in most directions (Figure 4.1). The setting was most likely chosen as the site for the plantation for ease of security against possible slave insurrections as well as for access to continuous eastern winds (Juraver and Eclar 1992: 41). Extant ground surface buildings and features included: the windmill, the foundation of the sugar works (*sucrerie*), other industrial buildings, house platforms of slave dwelling remains, and the ruins of the planter family's dwelling, or "greathouse" (*maison de maître*). Directly west of the site, at the base of the ridge, there is a modernized well, known to have been in use since the late 19th century; it most likely served as the local water source for the plantation. While the coastline lies roughly 2.2 km (1.37 miles) to the east, the location of the closest stream or river that may have been exploited for fresh water before the well's construction is not currently known. With no currently known running water in proximity to the plantation, it is surmised that nearby ponds served as the main source of water for humans and animals.

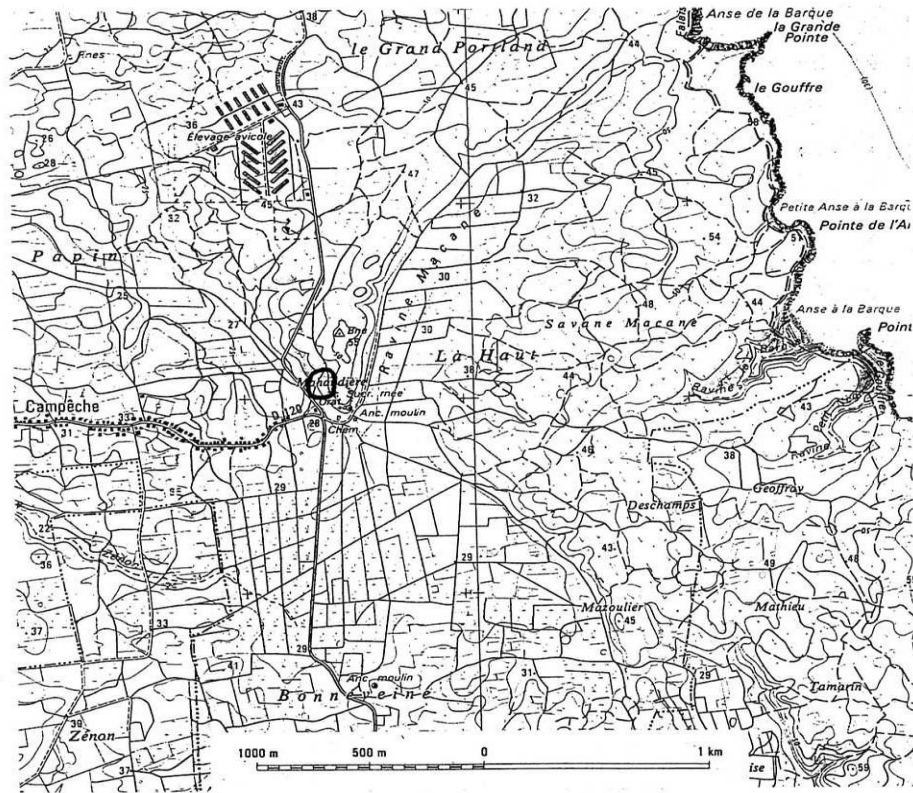


Figure 4.1: Area map of Habitation La Mahaudière in the commune of Anse-Bertrand from la carte IGN 4601G Série Bleue, Anse-Bertrand/Morne-à-l'Eau/Le Moule.

The slave village, this project's main focus, is located adjacent to the sugar cane fields, the sugar works, and near to the residence of the slave owning family. According to the archaeological survey and maps, the orientation of the slave houses conform to the topography of the landscape, with houses placed parallel to the natural

slope (Figure 4.2).²⁵ It was quickly discovered that while the defunct windmill and surviving industrial buildings associated with the sugar works were relatively free of vegetation, the slave village and residential management houses were not. Before archaeological surveys and excavation began, the slave village area had to be cleared of thick, dense, and spiny vegetation overgrowth in order to identify any remaining structures.

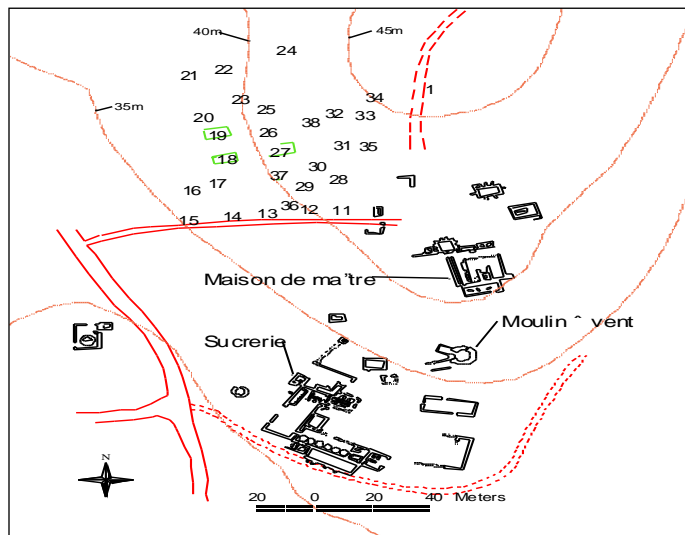


Figure 4.2: La Mahaudière archaeological site plan with defunct roads (dotted red line); current roads (red line); several standing structures including *maison de maître* (planter's great house); *sucrerie* (sugar works); *Moulin à vent* (windmill); and the slave village with individual house dwelling locations (locus) defined by number. Courtesy of Kenneth Kelly.

²⁵ Interestingly, the plantation layout is identical to that of the Drax Hall plantation of St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica (Armstrong 1990: 88). This plan view is similar to many other sugar plantations throughout the Caribbean.

African Diasporic Houseyards

In the interest of analyzing enslaved women's roles in the production of identity and culture via foodways, my focus centers on the slave village houseyards. The houseyard was a social space and physical place in which the enslaved inhabitants could exercise a degree of autonomy in their daily activities within the slave village. It was a place for domestic work and social interaction, as well as, the space to engage in individual and communal religious rites (Armstrong 1990: 93, 98; Armstrong and Fleishman 2003; Heath and Bennett 2000: 39-42; Mintz 1974: 431; Thompson 1990: 164-167). Much of the domestic labor was viewed as women's work, especially laundry chores, cooking and food preparation. Moreover, because enslaved women controlled so many of the domestic activities, the houseyard and, to some extent, the residence, were women's spaces (Battle 2004: 47; Pulsipher 1993a: 55; Pulsipher 1993b).²⁶ Since I support the hypothesis that foodways is a conceptual arena in which African cultural agency and resistance were practiced by women and fed an emergent French Antillean identity, my primary goal was to interpret archaeological evidence associated with cooking and other culinary activities excavated from the yardspace from the slave period.

²⁶ I tread lightly in the use of the term 'household' given its heterogeneity over time and space which requires one to be cautious against 'all-encompassing cross-cultural' definitions (Franklin 1997: 46). For my purposes, I embrace Maria Franklin's definition (2004: xiii) in that "it is the most basic social unit of analysis 'accessible' through the archaeological record, typically via residential structures and activity areas".

With regard to the remnants of foodstuffs and artifacts associated with foodways, we attempted to locate activity areas immediately adjacent to, and surrounding the structures, in order to understand the relationship between structures and houseyards in order to spatially locate communal activity areas where food might have been produced, processed, prepared, consumed, and discarded as part of enslaved Africans' survival strategies (Pulsipher 1993a: 51, 1994: 217; Reeves 1997).²⁷ My research goals were dependent upon the recovery and analysis of faunal material to determine aspects of the enslaved community's daily alimentary praxis performed in the houseyards of the slave village.

The analysis of houseyard assemblages plays a central role in the archaeological reconstructions of enslaved Caribbean social and economic life. The enslaved community had limited freedom under the institution of slavery and this was exemplified by overt and continuous planter control throughout the plantation landscape. The enslaved community defined activities within the slave village houses and yard space often with strong African sensibilities (Anthony 1976: 11; Armstrong 1991: 54; Epperson 1990; Klingelhofer 1987). As seen in West Africa (Clapperton 1829: 92, 141, 214; Caillie 1968: 202-203, 205, 302-304), the overwhelming amount of time spent by enslaved Africans in the Americas took place outside of their houses in dealing with cooking and food

²⁷ As of the 2005 field season, no evidence of distinct garden plots, livestock pens, or definite activity areas associated with food production and processing at the slave dwellings was identified.

preparation (Du Tertre 1978: 514; Philippo 1843: 221), tending to house gardens (Beckles 1989a: 78; Debien 2000: 178, 183, 207-208; Kimber 1907: 6; McKee 1988; Mintz 1974:186-192; Saint-Méry vol. 2 1958: 58-61; Tomich 1993: 230) and livestock pens (Debien 2000: 188; Kelly 1838; Morgan 1988: 468; Philippo 1843: 217; Vlach 1991: 220). Aside from functional daily activities and socializing, scholars have documented religious activities and the honoring of ancestors within certain areas of the yard as well (Debien 2000: 292; Armstrong and Fleischman 2003). Moreover, houseyards offer the opportunity for gender-specific studies of slave activities.

Although my gendered perspective highlights women's participation in activities in and around the slave village, socializing between men and women was also an integral part of houseyard use. I focus on alimentary practices and culinary exercises by women, yet I do want to note that various activities around the house needed to be done by all. In simpler terms, the houseyard landscape was a cultural artifact used and controlled by the members of the slave quarters. Furthermore, in those activities performed every day in the houseyard within the confines of slavery, an emergent French Antillean identity and culture formed and was negotiated by enslaved laborers.

The importance of the houseyard area in the study of social space and slave daily practices cannot be overstated. It is generally accepted that slave dwellings, like

their West African counterparts (Vlach 1993: 165), were used primarily for sleeping and shelter while all other domestic activities occurred outside, mainly in the yard (Craton and Saunders 1992: 306; Mintz 1974: 243; Pulsipher 1993a: 51; Pulsipher 1993b: 110). Although maps and archaeological evidence show that the space between slave houses was only a few yards apart (Abenon 1987: 110; Bequet 1986), it is in the yard that slaves could exercise every day strategies to display some independence, a sense of ownership over their household labor, African Caribbean cultural and spiritual influence, and nurture a degree of communal security (Epperson 1990:32-34; Ferguson 1992; Heath and Bennett 2000; Franklin 1997; Leone and Fry 1999; Orser 1994; Wilkie 2000; Pulsipher 1994: 217-218; Westmacott 1992; Wilkie 1996b).

It is important to stress that this study of yard space is not intended to obscure the significance of the houses, or the artifacts recovered from them, for understanding enslaved lifeways (Heath and Bennett 2000: 38). The archaeology of yards is integral to the study of the cultural use of space on African American sites. Still, their study provides only limited information and should be integrated into a broader archaeological interpretation of the built environment and use of space. House and yard assemblages together will provide a more accurate account of the private activities and relationships of the enslaved community.

Field Methods and Data Recovery

In 2001, Ken Kelly began an initial island-wide survey to locate and assess slave villages of the plantations (Kelly 2001). During a pedestrian survey of La Mahaudière, Kelly found a well-preserved living space evidenced from the ground surface by rubble from ruined houses and an artifact scatter. Kelly returned with a research team from 2002 to 2005 to map the site and excavate several domicile features. The project's objectives included the following: to establish the limits of the plantation site and the limits of the slave village within the site; to identify and extend sub-surface investigations inside and outside various structures including the planter's house and several slave structures in order to discover the chronological order of construction and occupation; to create a map of the site that includes all standing structures and sub-surface architectural elements associated with the slave village, as well as all excavated units; and to create a database of artifacts with a chronological sequence for artifact dating (Kelly 2001, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2004, 2007).²⁸ The site map was created using a total station and then integrated with an existing map of the industrial structures created by the Groupe de Recherche en Archéologie industrielle et Patrimoine.

²⁸ The objectives of Kelly's project are only partially explained here. Another field season occurred in the summer of 2005, which I was unable to participate in, which extended the archaeological methodology and objectives.

The evidence of an African impact on the landscape is most visible in the remains of the slave village. As stated earlier, the slave village at La Mahaudière kept with the tradition of many plantation layouts throughout the Caribbean. Conveniently located close to the nearby sugar cane fields and *sucrerie*, the slave village sits on a hill slope away from the easterly winds with poor, shallow soils not advantageous for growing crops. The slave village was discovered in 2001 during the initial survey, and is located northwest and down slope from the planter's house, the windmill, and the sugar works (see Figure 4.2). Its boundaries were established using a systematic transect survey with surface collections of 2 x 2 meter areas at 10-meter intervals.

The most visible remains of the slave village are the discrete low mounds of building rubble called "house platforms".²⁹ These platforms are what remain of the slave structures that had been torn down, most likely during the mid-20th century. Twenty-nine house platforms were recorded during the initial survey of 2002. The slave structures at La Mahaudière have limestone foundations with wattle and daub walls. The rectangular structural remains or "house platforms" were identified by their relatively square pattern, formed by scattered limestone cut from bedrock and plaster, and/or brick fragments that remained of the house's foundation. Some house foundations are evident above ground with rough corners and low walls because they had not been completely knocked down after the plantation became defunct or had fallen to scatter due to natural causes. While slave vernacular architecture varied in

²⁹ The house platforms were also called "house areas".

styles and spatial layout during the early part of French colonial slavery, by the mid-18th century, French regulations imposed more social and spatial control over the enslaved community forcing the slave houses to become uniform in size (Debien 2000: 220-226).³⁰ According to the mapped house platforms, the slave dwellings at La Mahaudière followed this rigid, regimented model for spatial organization of homes in the beginning of the 19th century, after the reenslavement, (See Kelly 2008, 2009; Kelly communication 2011).

Aside from visible house platforms, the slave village area does have surface scattering of 18th- and 19th-century artifacts. Preliminary testing for refuse disposal suggested that the slave village had extensive, sheet surface middens associated with long-term occupations located in close proximity to living spaces. While the majority of the middens do not represent primary deposits as defined by Schiffer (1987), intensive excavations of yard space between several slave houses do allow us to address questions regarding daily subsistence strategies and foodways.

Excavation Methods

The archaeological team excavated the site with the objective of understanding how social space was used, with particular emphasis on the enslaved

³⁰ Sub-surface post hole features suggest that the earliest slave housing pattern at Habitation La Mahaudière was more varied with structures made out of wattle and daub and or in the tradition of *kaz en gaulette* (Kelly 2007; 2009: 88).

daily practice of foodways. Within the slave village, more than 80 square meters were excavated. Each mapped house platform and its surrounding yard space was designated as a “locus” to be interpreted as the potential living space of one household (Figure 4.3). Based on the summer fieldwork of 2001, 2 x 2 meter excavation units were placed in and about Loci 1, 18, 26, and 32 during the 2002 summer season. Excavations at these areas were chosen to gain some potential archaeological insights as to the range of artifacts associated with daily household activities that could be recovered, as well as to help assess which loci may require more intensive excavations in future field seasons.

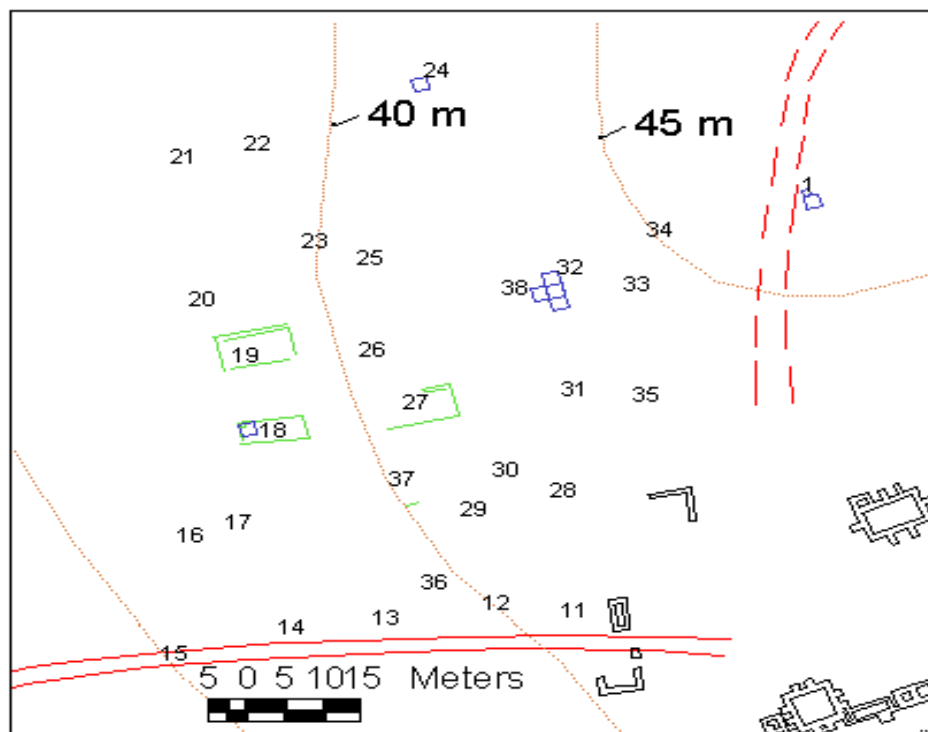


Figure 4.3: La Mahaudière slave village in detail. Structures are indicated by green lines.

In 2003, excavation units were placed inside the adjacent dwellings of loci 18 and 19, and we laid intersecting trenches between the structures to study the use of yard space. During 2004 and 2005, the project's new objectives included an attempt to understand the architectural use of space. The area of study was expanded to include shovel test pits (STP) and more 2 x 2 meter units excavated in three large 5 x 5 meter blocks (deemed Blocks A, B, C) between loci 18, 19, and 27 (Figure 4.4). A combination of 81 2 x 2 meter units and 20 STPs were opened. To understand

architectural chronology and construction methods of the slave dwellings, excavations at each locus included units inside and outside the structures.

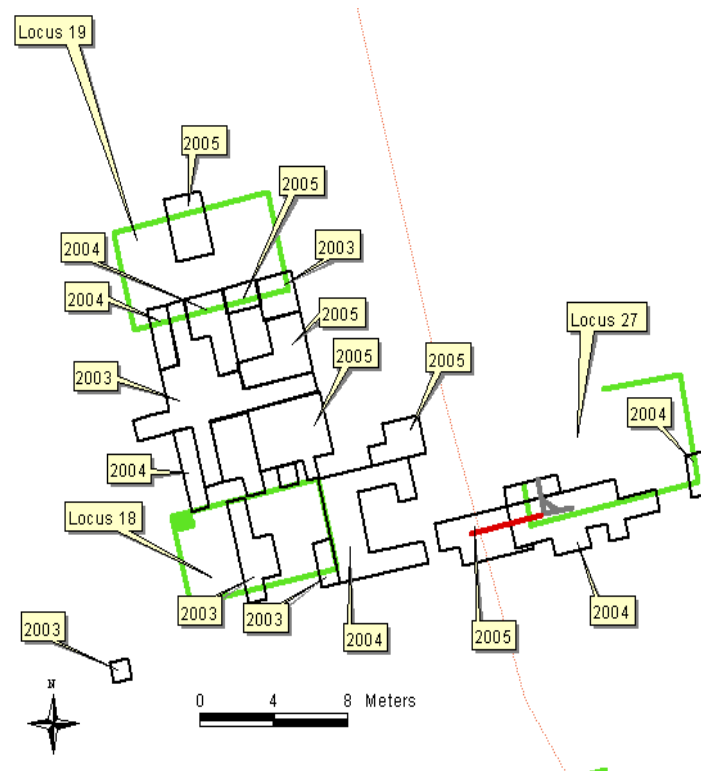


Figure 4.4: Locus 18, 19, and 27 dwelling remains outlined in green with excavated areas of field seasons 2003, 2004 and 2005. Courtesy of Kenneth Kelly.

In the greater scheme of the La Mahaudière project, we were interested in comparing slave foodways with that of the planter and management groups through studying their respective ceramic and faunal assemblages. Shovel test pits at 10-meter intervals and four 1 x 1 meter test units were excavated around the *maison de maître*

building in 2004. While a wide range of artifacts were recovered, we failed to find undisturbed early contexts. The most significant disturbance lies to the east of the great house and down slope of the hill. This is probably where midden deposits associated with the great house kitchen might have been found. Unfortunately, the hillside has been impacted by modern-day stone quarrying. Thus, the deposits have been destroyed. A comparative analysis of foodways has been suspended until other areas associated with non-slave midden deposits are discovered.

Preliminary sub-surface testing revealed that the yard stratigraphy demonstrated no more than one natural soil stratum. Thus, the yard units and STPs were excavated by shovel and trowel in 10-cm arbitrary levels for the best vertical control of artifact provenience. Most test units yielded four arbitrary levels before encountering bedrock. The exception included occasional test units excavated on a slope, where soil deposits from the surface extended between 30 to 60 centimeters in depth before we encountered the limestone bedrock. Scale plan views, digital photographs, and profile drawings were made for every excavation unit. Any features and other anomalies were excavated and provenienced separately. Features were recorded, mapped, photographed, and then bisected.

Data Recovery

All excavated soil was sieved using 1/8-inch coarse dry screens. After the artifacts were retrieved, they were preliminarily identified and recorded, and then taken to the laboratory for cleaning, processing, and analysis.³¹ In an effort to recover microscale food remains, flotation samples were taken from a few random features.³² The fill from a small number of small features, such as deposits from post holes, were collected in their entirety for flotation or fine screened through 1/16-inch mesh for optimal artifact recovery. This was performed in the possible event of discovering carbon-laden soil or bone scatters (e.g., Grayson 1984; Reitz and Scarry 1985; Wagner 1982). For larger features, a minimum of half the feature fill was kept for flotation while the other half was sent to coarse screening. Water screening of float samples as well as dry screening using a series of nesting screens of 1/4, 1/8, and 1/16-inch in size was used to insure the minimum loss of small faunal remains such as fish scales and eardrums.³³ However, after the water screening process to recover light and heavy fractions, no faunal or botanical remains were identified. The faunal remains I studied were recovered using 1/8-inch coarse dry screens only.

³¹ All faunal bone was preliminarily identified and recorded during laboratory artifact processing. Next, the faunal remains were separated from the other artifacts of its provenience, boxed and shipped for zooarchaeological analysis.

³² A very limited number of flotation samples were collected; less than 10.

³³ When flotation samples are water screened, nearly 100% of all faunal material (as well as botanical remains) may be recovered (Reitz and Scarry 1985: 12). Random samples of flotation (size: 1 liter) of test units were not executed because the sample did not demonstrate enough variability nor did it provide a quantifiable sub-sample.

Excavation Results

Excavations in the yard between Loci 18, 19, and 27 neither revealed specific activity areas associated with food processing or preparation, nor any evidence for other subsistence strategies to state where animal pens and house gardens may have been. The yard space within the slave village is characterized by a single soil stratum (most often, Munsell 10YR 3/2, a very dark grayish brown) of silty loam, choked with material culture on the surface and throughout the stratum. The stratum gradually becomes more inundated with limestone fragments as it bottoms onto the bedrock.

When considering the examination of yard space at La Mahaudière, certain concerns must be addressed. Postholes alignments found under and outside the current stone foundations of Loci 18 and 19 show us that house versus yard spaces were not fixed throughout time (Figure 4.5). Because of the slave village's long-term occupation at La Mahaudière, which included shifts in housing styles, placement, and construction, the yards were likely never fixed in space as well. For this reason, I will discuss the site chronology first for a general understanding of yard use over time. This will be followed by a brief summary of the units placed in the yards of loci 18, 19, and 27, the associated features encountered, and the material culture recovered.³⁴

³⁴ The summary of material culture will not include faunal remains, which will be discussed in Chapter Five.

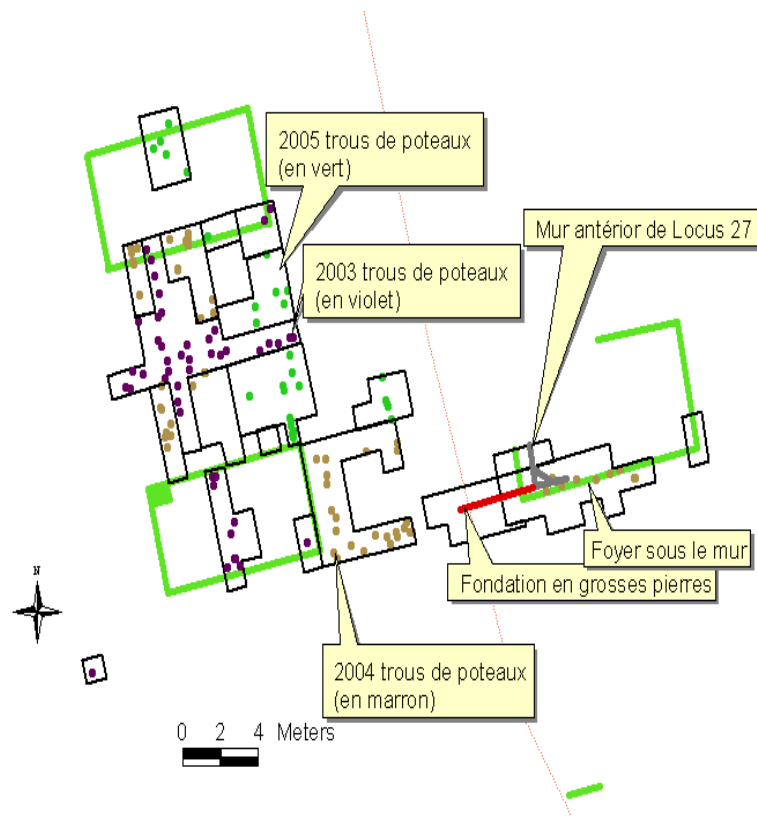


Figure 4.5: Loci 18, 19, and 27. The green rectangles represent the stone house foundations. The black shapes represent the excavated areas in and around the loci. The colored dots represent the post hole features excavated between 2003 and 2005. Courtesy of Ken Kelly.

Features

The overwhelming majority of features found in the yard spaces of Loci 18 and 19 were post holes dug into the limestone bedrock associated with *kaz in gaulettes*, which predated the stone foundations of the 19th-century dwellings. Artifact analysis of ceramics found in the post holes reveal that these wooden

structures were occupied possibly before 1760 and until the 1790s, supporting the idea that enslaved laborers were living and working on this plantation during the second half of the 18th century.

More than 80 post holes were documented and excavated with a hand trowel and spoon. They varied in size, measuring from 9 to 24 centimeters in diameter with a range of 20 to 31 centimeters in depth. Five trench-like features were also recorded and excavated with hand trowels. These features ranged between 2 and 13 centimeters in depth with the width fluctuating between 11 and 20 centimeters, often cutting into the bedrock. It is not currently known what these trench features are, but the artifact assemblage suggests that they are associated with the 18th-century occupation.

One interesting feature, unlike any other documented, was Feature 18. Located in the vicinity of Locus 18, this feature was recorded as a small, shallow pit, oblong in shape and characterized by ash-laden, silty loam soil. Artifacts retrieved included the entire skeletal remains of a young goat that had been burned, unglazed coarse earthenware, burnished coarse earthenware, creamware, pearlware, faïence brune and blanche, wrought nails, a kaolin clay pipe fragment and undiagnostic green bottle glass. Since we recovered the young goat in its entirety, it was not butchered and consumed for food. This feature may have been associated with a religious/ritual event that occurred during the 18th century.

Site Chronology

The ability to construct a site chronology was impeded by several factors. First, we were unable to locate many soil deposits or features with deposits that could aid in understanding site formation processes over time. This is with the exception of postholes and several hearths that were roughly seriated for chronological order. Despite our efforts, we could not find features associated with primary refuse disposal. The artifact deposits, for the most part, were in sheet midden form. Despite the fact that the site demonstrated only one natural soil stratum, some stratigraphic distinctions could be made. The post hole features which cut into the limestone bedrock did allow for temporal comparisons. Many of these post holes appear to be associated with *kaz en gaulettes*, structures that pre-date the stone masonry dwellings. Ceramics date the architectural features to the mid-to-late 18th century. We compared the artifact assemblages from various houseyards as another diachronic indicator of change. British-inspired French slipwares, faïences, French refined wares imitating creamware and shell-edge pearlware as well as metal objects such as wrought and cut nails, were most abundant in the last two levels before bedrock, deemed “Yard I” (YDI). These artifacts are associated with late 18th- and early 19th- century occupations under the institution of slavery (Gibson 2007: 194). The 20 cm of soil above the slave occupation levels, roughly to ground surface, represents “Yard I” (YDI), and had mid-to-late 19th century artifacts such as wire nails and more recent objects such as French coins with dates as late as 1937 (Ibid.). YDI deposits represent

site occupation from 1810s-1820s to the 20th century as determined by Heather Gibson (2009). Thus, the levels of YDI and YDII combined contained a mélange of artifacts that revealed the slave village was continuously occupied from the second half of the 18th century until the early 20th century. While a general understanding of La Mahaudière's site chronology spans over 150 years of domestic occupation, I will briefly discuss the implications and complexities of analyzing French pottery.

Artifact Analysis of French Material Culture

While most historical archaeologists are well versed with Ivor Noël Hume's Bible for identifying colonial British-American artifacts, the dating of French pottery has always been problematic.³⁵ Historical archaeologists investigating French colonial sites of North America along with material culture specialists in Canada, since the 1970s, have invested in classificatory methods for French material culture, especially for ceramics categories (see Waselkov 1997: 16; Waselkov and Walthall 2002). Yet, few such studies have been developed for Caribbean sites.

Excavations at La Mahaudière recovered many diagnostic French coarse earthenwares and a few refined materials such as faïence brune and faïence blanche. However, it was the French refined wares that were difficult to date. Virtually all of the French refined ceramics were similar, and in some cases identical, to British

³⁵ *A Guide to Artifacts in Colonial America* (1970).

counterparts. We recovered French British- inspired slipwares, as well as British refined wares such as creamware, pearlware, whiteware and ironstone vessel forms. However, while the French and British ceramics shared many similar manufacturing techniques and decoration, we could not assume that they were necessarily contemporaneous. Heather Gibson, who was part of the field project for several seasons, assisted in the development of ceramic typologies by researching 18th- and 19th- century wares at pottery-producing centers in France. She contends that we should currently assume a “slight five to ten year lag” for the French ceramics that most closely resemble the British types at La Mahaudière. However, she warns that, “this might not always be a safe assumption to make” (Gibson 2007: 293). The implications of the difficulties of dating the French wares should be clear: establishing a site chronology, which is dependent upon ceramics, was a difficult task at this particular site and may prove to be so for other contemporaneous sites in Guadeloupe.

The Artifact Assemblage

This section is not intended to provide a detailed account of every type of material culture recovered from the yard units and features. Rather, it is just to summarize our findings during several excavation seasons in order to provide the reader with an overall description of our finds. In general, much of the material

culture was recovered from sheet-like middens dispersed throughout the single soil stratum. In all yard areas associated with the three loci we collected a variety of artifacts: architectural nails and other articles made of ferrous and non-ferrous metals, brick and tile. Clothing artifacts included bone buttons. We recovered the occasional agriculture-related artifact, such as a hoe fragment, and other items like coins and European smoking pipes made from kaolin clay. A substantial percentage of the artifacts were of the food-related category, either for food preparation, storage, or consumption.³⁶ There was a wide variety of European glassware and ceramics, and locally produced ceramics as well. Although much of the glassware fragments did not have any characteristics indicative of specific time periods for manufacture, we were fortunate that much of the pottery sherds were diagnostic. As listed in the site chronology subheadings, it was the concentrations of certain pottery types that allowed for general temporal estimates to be made for site occupation of the village area.

Some of the artifacts recovered in high frequency throughout the yard space between Loci 18, 19, and 27 included wrought, cut, and wire nails, and patinated and unpatinated green bottle glass and stemware. The pottery included French coarse earthenware vessels, such as Vallauris unglazed and lead-glazed ceramics (the most abundant lead-glazed variety recovered at La Mahaudière), Saintonge with green lead

³⁶ An average of 40% of the total assemblage for each household is associated with the food-related category (See Figure 6.2 Gibson 2007: 240).

glaze (Figure 4.6), French tin-glazed faïence varieties, and slipwares such as Huveaune (Figure 4.7).



Figure 4.6: (Left) Vallauris sherd with handle. (Right) Saintonge pot (marmite) lid. Courtesy of Kenneth Kelly.



Figure 4.7: (Left) Faïence brune, Rouen Polychrome. (Right) Huveaune slipware. Courtesy of Kenneth Kelly.

Nearly all of the coarse earthenwares were hollowwares, including some locally made industrial ceramics (i.e., drip jars and sugarmolds). These were originally used in the sugarworks areas, but were also alternatively used as jars for storage, for food consumption, or as pots for cooking on open fires.³⁷ Along with ceramic pots, some cast iron pots were also used by the laborers in the village which strongly suggests that iron pots (Figure 4.8) were still significant in food preparation in the 19th century despite their low frequency (Gibson 2007: 267). The more refined ceramic types included French stoneware, French versions of creamware, pearlware, and whiteware, and a low frequency of European porcelain.

³⁷ With the exception of one vessel sherd recovered, which had been part of chamber pot (Gibson 2007).



Figure 4.8: Cast iron cooking pot (marmite) handle. Courtesy of Kenneth Kelly.

Shifting ceramic consumption patterns over time is another important finding that will be briefly discussed for each locus, based on Gibson's (2007) very thoughtful analysis of diachronic artifact pattern use. Using ceramic analysis her work examined how global and local economics affected the daily practices of the laborers at La Mahaudière. While I highlight some interesting diachronic patterns associated with food-related ceramic categories in the yard spaces, Gibson's dissertation is an in-depth study of all the ceramic functional groups as well as sub-groups across the house structures and their corresponding yard spaces with critical interpretations of artifact use via context. Although Gibson's dissertation does not

provide a quantitative analysis on ceramics by function, it does demonstrate a distinct predominance of hollowwares, a phenomenon observed at many slave-associated sites and demonstrates the enslaved community's reliance on and exploitation of the internal island economy.³⁸ More importantly for the purpose of this dissertation, Gibson's analysis provides some insight into the diet and culinary activities of the enslaved community, which I will discuss later in this chapter.

Locus 18

The most concentrated survey of the La Mahaudière project was centered on Locus 18. Over 40 units in the associated yard were excavated. Our survey and excavations suggest that Locus 18 is the longest-occupied portion of the slave village we have yet to discover. Numerous post hole features were found throughout the yard and under the stone masonry foundation of the structure, dating back to the second half of the 18th century.

Of the ware types previously mentioned as ubiquitous throughout the yard spaces of the village, other food-related ceramics recovered included Albisola (a red refined and lead-glazed earthenware) Chinese export porcelain, and Brittany Blue-on-

³⁸ For a general understanding I present several examples: for hollowware to flatware percentage discussion via intrasite comparisons between American and Caribbean slave sites, see Paul Farnsworth (1999: 121) and Madsen (2005: 116); a general discussion of intrasite comparisons throughout the South as it may sometimes pertain to status (Kelso 1997: 96; Otto 1984; Shackel and Little 1994).

White hand-painted, tin-glazed refined earthenware. During the 18th-century occupation, over 40% of the total artifact assemblage was associated with food-related categories. Within the ceramic category, according to Heather Gibson's analysis, the highest percentage of ceramic wares recovered (50%) was associated with faïence types, while another 30% of refined wares consisted of creamware, pearlware, and whiteware. The remaining 20% was identified as 'other' (Gibson 2007: 193, 196). Food-related artifacts increased to represent over 50% of the assemblage during the mid-to-late 19th century. Faïence appears to have diminished in popularity while the refined wares increased in use throughout the 19th century, with whiteware as the dominant ceramic type, representing nearly 80% of the assemblage (Ibid.).

Gibson's analysis of coarse earthenware revealed that the unglazed coarse earthenwares were the most abundant vessels used during the 18th century (YDII). Vallauris wares represent just fewer than 20% of the total assemblage in the earlier context than in the 19th century. In the later context, Vallauris represented over 50% of the YDI assemblage (Gibson 2007: 199).

Locus 19

In relation to units associated with Locus 18, data from 20 square meters excavated in the yard of Locus 19 suggests occupation in the early to mid-19th century (Kelly n.d.). When compared with Locus 18, Gibson reported several similarities of artifacts and artifact patterns. The variety of coarse and refined ceramics, glassware and metal is similar to Locus 18's assemblage. A notable find was an 18th-century cast pewter spoon. Like Locus 18, whiteware dominated the refined wares of the post-emancipation context (over 55%) while the majority of refined wares of the slavery context were faïence (represented over 37%) (Gibson 2007: 193, 201).

Ceramic analysis revealed that locally produced unglazed coarse earthenware (thick and thin-bodied vessels) represents over 64% of the ceramic assemblage of YD II. In the later context, consumption patterns shifted with glazed imported coarse earthenware dominating local unglazed varieties (Gibson 2007: 202-203).

Both Loci 18 and 19 demonstrated several interesting similarities of consumption patterns associated with ceramics. A substantial amount of artifacts recovered from the yard space were associated with food activities. Free and enslaved laborers used a variety of locally produced and imported European ceramic types. Most of the coarse earthenwares (glazed and unglazed) were hollowwares used for food preparation (including cooking) and food consumption. Locally produced

unglazed coarse earthenware (thick and thin-bodied) vessels were most prominent during the 18th century. The highest percentage of refined wares recovered for the slavery context was of faïence types. Over the decades ceramic consumption patterns shifted. More ceramics associated with the food preparation category were recovered for the post-emancipation era, evidenced by a sharp increase of Vallauris marmites (cooking pots) demonstrating a possible preference for cheap glazed imports over unglazed locally produced wares. In general, glazed imported coarse earthenware dominated local unglazed varieties over the decades.³⁹ Moreover, whiteware vessels also grew in popularity and eventually dominated the refined ceramic assemblage during the 19th century.

Locus 27

The focus of Locus 27's investigation was to understand the construction and architecture of its associated dwelling, so fewer units were opened in its corresponding yard space. Locus 27's initial occupation possibly dates to the 18th century via evidence of post holes that predate the stone masonry architecture. Locus 27's food-related artifacts are different from those of Loci 18 and 19. Furthermore, the locus' pattern of refined ware pattern use throughout time is dissimilar from the

³⁹ Gibson (2007: 230-231) notes two exceptions in the ratio of local coarse wares over imports at two loci that I do not discuss in this dissertation. Although there is no definite explanation for a ratio that favors local wares over imports, she does offer some possible explanations such as house abandonment or the area was used as a dumping ground.

other loci's patterns (Gibson 2007: 225). If one were to interpret the ceramics from Locus 27 alone, it would be as follows. Faïence is not as popular during the 18th century. There is a greater reliance on creamware, pearlware and whiteware. During the latter temporal context, whiteware has the highest frequency for this context, representing 70% of the total sherd assemblage (Gibson 2007: 193, 207). Glazed imported coarse earthenware dominated the earliest context (YDII), representing over 60% of the assemblage. However, its popularity diminished over time and there was a greater reliance on local unglazed vessels throughout the 19th century (Gibson 2007: 207).

Interpretations of the Ceramic Assemblage

Analysis of the ceramic assemblage of the yard spaces of the three loci revealed that the laborers used a wide variety of ceramic types, including locally produced wares and French imports. Some interesting consumption trends were noted. Consumption patterns and choices varied across space and over time. Locus 18 and 19 households were the most similar in consumption patterns out of the three loci investigated. During the earliest occupation of the village, Locus 18 and 19 relied on a greater abundance of locally-produced unglazed coarsewares and specifically French tin-glazed faïence for their refined wares. Over time, choices changed and by the mid-to-late 19th century, these households preferred French glazed coarse

earthenwares such as Vallauris for cooking pots and the French variety of whitewares for refined vessels.

Interestingly, in other cases, consumption choices revealed dissimilar patterns. Analysis of the assemblage from Locus 27 indicated artifact patterns unlike Loci 18 and 19 for the same temporal context. For example, locally produced unglazed coarse earthenware and faïence wares were never high in frequency at Locus 27 during the 18th-century context as it was for the other two households. Instead, the opposite was true. Glazed imported coarse earthenware dominated the earliest context with a strong reliance on creamware, pearlware and whiteware, instead of faïence possibly demonstrating variation of consumer choice within the slave village.

The recovery of a wide variety of ceramics at La Mahaudière shows us that the enslaved community made participated in the island's internal economy despite the constraints of slavery. The combination of locally-produced unglazed wares and French lead-glazed coarse earthenwares reveals diachronic patterns of limitation in acquiring ceramics during the mid- to late-18th century and greater access to local and imported goods by the mid-19th century. Moreover, it appears that even in times of limited access to consumer goods, black women adapted to such conditions and found alternative sources for food-related vessels. This has been exemplified by the recovery of locally-produced industrial wares, originally used in the process of

making sugar from sugar cane juice, that were re-vamped for domestic use (Gibson 2007: 272).

The discussion of locally produced cooking pots and their French import counterparts is not intended to negate the laborers' likely use of organic-made materials for food-related use such as gourds, wooden bowls, and containers. Rather, I rely on the ceramics to demonstrate the enslaved community's high reliance on earthenware over iron vessels for cooking. According to Gibson (2007: 226), less than 5% of sherds recovered associated with cooking pots were made of cast iron, an unusual occurrence when La Mahaudière is compared with similar sites. Although there is no definitive reason for this discrepancy, I tend to agree with Gibson that the reliance on ceramic cooking pots over iron may demonstrate enslaved women's preference of African (and possibly) French culinary traditions (Ibid.).

For the purposes of my work, the most important information of the ceramic assemblage does not pertain to vessel type but rather vessel form to provide clues as to how food was served, consumed, and prepared. While there were no flatware-to-hollowware ratios given in Gibson's dissertation, there is some quantitative evidence on ceramics function by locus to provide certain attestations. The prevalence of coarse utilitarian hollowwares and ceramic and iron cooking pots is indicative of the

cooking, preparing, consuming, and storage of one-pot meals.⁴⁰ Much of the glazed and unglazed coarse earthenwares (locally-produced and French imported) were bowl vessels and cooking pots, suggesting the cooking and consuming soups and stews, a West African culinary tradition often associated with enslaved communities.

Remarks

To summarize, this chapter provided an overview of the archaeological evidence recovered at the site especially that associated with my research questions. With respect to houseyards, I outlined the methods we used in excavating the yard space between the house structures, and noted that the faunal assemblage (discussed in the next chapter) was recovered through dryscreening. The second half of this chapter focused on the artifact assemblage and how ceramic analysis has provided insight into the laborers' consumer choices involving ceramics (Gibson 2007). The evidence suggests variability in ceramic consumption patterns, preferences rooted in African culinary traditions (e.g., the dependence on hollow forms, and the preference for ceramic over iron pots for cooking), as well as improvisation in re-using vessels intended for processing sugar for food preparation instead during what may have been periods of limited access to the local market economy.

⁴⁰ The earlier discussion related to the recovery of an 18th century pewter spoon at Locus 19 lends to this argument.

With preliminary insight into the complexity of La Mahaudière laborers' ceramic consumption patterns and observations on ceramic form and function to indicate how food may have been cooked and consumed, Chapter 5 will consider the faunal assemblage recovered from the site. Through faunal analysis I was able to determine specifics regarding the site inhabitants' diet and subsistence practices over time that will lend credence to the interpretation of the ceramic assemblage (especially in regard to the preparation of soups and stews). Later, I combine the various data and insights derived from a consideration of the use of yard spaces, the patterns of ceramic use, and the faunal analysis in order to proceed with interpretations of women's roles in food-related activities (see Chapter 7).

Chapter V:

Zooarchaeology

This chapter will focus on the faunal remains retrieved from the houseyards of the slave village. Since the La Mahaudière project is ongoing the results I detail in this chapter are based only on the faunal data collected during the four seasons (2001-2005) of excavations. While faunal remains were recovered from nearly every excavation unit located inside and outside slave houses, I chose to analyze only the faunal remains recovered from houseyards since it was within those spaces that I hoped to find evidence for foodways.⁴¹ I describe the zooarchaeological methods used and interpretations of the faunal evidence as they pertain to my major questions regarding foodways of the enslaved community and later free laborers who continued to reside in what we have defined as the slave village. Even though the results of my analysis do not provide us with a comprehensive knowledge of foodways at La Mahaudière, they do offer the beginning of a compelling narrative of those practices. Thus, this analysis can serve as a foundation for future explorations into the foodways at La Mahaudière and in the French Antillean islands.

This chapter is divided into three major sections. The first section, “Zooarchaeological Methods”, describes my primary and secondary datasets. The primary data is both the identification and quantification of the faunal remains, which

⁴¹ A zooarchaeological report based on the analysis of the entire faunal sample for the slave village will be completed in 2011 to be incorporated in future La Mahaudière site reports at a later date.

includes the number of identifiable specimens (NISP) and weight determinations in grams. Secondary data derived from methods such as determining MNI (minimum number of individuals), percentages, biomass estimates, tooth wear and aging, modification marks, and skeletal part representation on faunal specimens. In the second section, “Results of Analysis”, I summarize the identified and quantified faunal remains and then present them in their temporal contexts. The first is the early slave period of circa pre-1775, which is represented by faunal remains recovered from postholes that cut into the site’s stratum. The second context dates to circa 1775-1820, a period marked by slavery, although revolutionary abolition occurred from 1790-1802. This second temporal context is represented by “Yard II” (YDII). The most recent temporal context (represented by “Yard I”, or YDI) dates to circa 1810s through the first decades of the 20th century. As such, it spans slavery and emancipation, and there is some temporal overlap with YDII. For each context, secondary data assists to provide a general assessment of the dietary protein contributions and subsistence strategies as well as changes in the laborers consumption patterns. In “Remarks and Final Thoughts,” I review the findings of my zooarchaeological analysis for the two temporal assemblages and I discuss how consumption choices for marine and terrestrial protein changed over time. My final thoughts emphasize biomass for interpreting the meat protein contribution to the slave and free laborer diets as one step towards gaining greater insight into slave and free laborer subsistence practice under French colonial rule on Guadeloupe.

Zooarchaeological Methods

Historical archaeologists have used faunal remains to demonstrate the resourcefulness of enslaved communities in supplementing their meager weekly rations with fish and wild game, thereby providing themselves with a more balanced and varied diet (Armstrong 1990; Crader 1990; Franklin 1997, 2001a, and 2004a; Otto 1984; Pulsipher 1994; Sichler 2003). Excavated faunal remains from slave-related sites can reveal subsistence patterns at the family and community levels of analysis (Crader 1990: 691). This section details my process of identification and quantification procedures used for analysis. These analytical practices, as with all zooarchaeological methods associated with historic and prehistoric assemblages, are not without some inherent problems (Grayson 1984; Landon 2005: 5-10; Reitz and Scarry 1985). Such issues are recognized and taken into account and are discussed in the following.

Due to poor preservation on most plantation sites, vertebrate fauna are often the only faunal evidence to survive taphonomic processes. Fortunately, excavations at La Mahaudière yielded vertebrate fauna and marine molluscs. With permission granted by the *Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles* (DRAC), excavated and inventoried faunal remains were transported to the Environmental Archaeology Laboratory at the Florida Museum of Natural History (FLMNH), University of Florida in Gainesville. This laboratory was chosen because the museum houses more

than 25 million specimens of amphibians, birds, butterflies, fish, mammals, molluscs, reptiles, vertebrate and invertebrate fossils, recent and fossil plants and associated databases and libraries, and is the largest natural history museum in the Southeast. In particular, the FLMNH's fish collection includes several thousand lots of deepwater marine fishes and collected freshwater and marine fishes from the Southeastern United States, the Mississippi Delta, Texas, and Campeche, Mexico, in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea. The museum's mammal and fish collections are primarily research collections, including comparative material for students and faculty of zooarchaeology and vertebrate paleontology (post-cranial skeletal collection).

At the FLMNH's Environmental Archaeology Laboratory, the faunal remains were fumigated for a minimum of 24 hours with the inorganic compound Vikane (sulfuryl fluoride). I sorted all of the faunal remains into specific animal classes within each provenience under the direction of Dr. Kitty Emery (Assistant Curator), Irvy R. Quitmyer (Sr. Biological Scientist), Sylvia Scudder (Collection Manager), and with additional assistance from Dr. Sharyn Jones (University of Alabama at Birmingham).

Primary Data

Identification and Quantification

The faunal material was identified using published references and comparative collections housed at the FLMNH. Bones of all taxa were counted and weighed to determine the abundance of the species identified. I identified the faunal remains to the lowest possible taxonomic level by direct comparison with reference specimens from the Environmental Archaeology Laboratory. Primary data, which is descriptive, included the number of identifiable specimens (NISP) and weight determinations were in grams. All vertebrate material was identified and quantified while the invertebrate data were quantified but only roughly identified. For example, molluscs, chitons and bivalves are currently categorized as phylum category. However, some gastropods were identified at lower taxonomic levels of genus (e.g., nerites) or species (e.g., West Indian Top Shell). Due to time constraints, an in-depth analysis of all the invertebrate remains was beyond the scope of this project.

The NISP was obtained by an actual count of bone and tooth fragments assigned to a particular taxon. One of the problems with NISP is that often the results will over-represent taxa with greater degrees of bone fragmentation (Grayson 1973, 1979, 1984). The NISP counts can also produce artificially inflated sample sizes. As stated before, most analytical practices can bias samples. To circumvent these biases,

secondary lines of data derived from primary data are incorporated. For the purposes of my research questions, I sought secondary data derived from methods such as determining MNI (minimum number of individuals), percentages, biomass estimates, and modification marks on faunal specimens. I also considered aging and the extent of tooth wear of domesticated animals to determine age at the time of death. Each of these zooarchaeological methods is discussed below.

Secondary Data

MNI

The MNI (minimum number of individuals) estimates are based on paired elements (Muir 1999; Reitz and Scarry 1985; Stokes 1998). This data is used to estimate the smallest number of individuals per taxon that present in an assemblage (Reitz and Wing 1999:195). Because most animals are symmetrical, it has been said that, “the number of paired elements from each side or from the midline indicates the minimum number of individuals needed to account for those elements” (Reitz and Scarry 1985: 17). However, there are possible complications when one considers this secondary data estimate. For example, when calculating MNIs from a small sample size, some zooarchaeologists note that the minimum numbers of individuals exaggerate the abundance or dietary importance of rare taxa within a collection. As

Donald K. Grayson (1978: 54) warns, “Within any site, taxa represented by smaller bone samples contribute proportionately greater minimum numbers of individuals than do taxa represented by larger bone samples”. Another problem with this analytical method is that there is no standard criterion for calculating MNI estimates. The number and types of criteria considered for MNI calculations varies considerably from analyst to analyst (Giovas 2009; White 1953). With the animal represented by its identified element, another problem is the assumption that the entire animal was consumed at the site, which may or may not be the case. Site formation processes that may include transportation, processing, distribution, and discarding of skeletal portions would impact the MNI value to an extent that its value would approach NISP values inaccurately. It is due to these concerns that several lines of evidence and quantifiable estimates such as bone weight, MNI, and allometry are employed along with NISP to minimize bias.

Since I stated that research can calculate MNI differently, the approaches I used were aimed at compensating for site formation processes and their effect on each taxon’s morphology. While the artifactual deposits within the single soil stratum of the slave village were, for the most part, recovered from sheet midden, some stratigraphic distinctions could be made. Diachronic indicators of change were based on the comparison of the artifact assemblages from the various houseyards which allowed us to determine arbitrarily three levels for analysis. Thus, YDI (Levels 1 and 2, the topmost 20 cm of the stratum) dates from the early 19th century (circa 1810s-

1820s) to early 20th century (spanning, therefore, the latter decades of slavery and post-emancipation era) and YDII (Levels 3+, from 20 cm below the ground surface to bedrock) is associated with 18th-century occupation (during slavery). In the case of pig elements, Level 1 yielded 37 pig fragments and Level 2 had 22 from various units associated with the yard. These two levels distinguished as YDI had a combined NISP of 59 and a MNI of 1. This means that parts of at least one pig are represented in the sample although more pigs may have been consumed on the site. Level 3 yielded 16 fragments and Levels 4+ yielded six with a MNI of 1. Most likely, the MNI is under-estimated for the sample. In other words, it is certain that far more than two pigs contributed to the enslaved and free laborers' diets at this site over a 150-year period. To compensate for this low MNI estimate, I calculate MNIs from posthole and feature proveniences as well. Therefore, while only two pig fragments were recovered, the taxon's MNI is 1.

In the case of marine molluscs, several different strategies were employed. Samples with un-fragmented or whole bivalves were divided by 2 to estimate the MNI. For gastropods, if the sample consisted of only fragments of a taxon, such as Queen's conch, then 1 MNI was observed. If six small fragments of Queen's conch shell were recovered, then its MNI is 1. If the entire shell of a gastropod was recovered, each NISP counted towards the MNI. For example, Level 3 may have yielded 117 fragments of West Indian Top Shell, yet only 28 complete and/or partially complete shells counted towards its MNI. Taxa with articulating parts

required the use of a formula to calculate its MNI. Although many chiton valves were recovered intact, many were too fragmented for reconstruction. To compensate for incomplete chiton valves, the formula of $NISP \times .09263$ calculated the sample's MNI.

Allometric Estimates of Biomass

At La Mahaudière, the overwhelming majority of faunal specimens were highly fragmented due to taphonomic processes that included human, carnivore and rodent alterations. A greater portion of this assemblage (by weight and count) is invertebrate specimens. Over 80% of the identified specimens in the assemblage are marine invertebrates and they represent over 90% of the assemblage by weight as well. For my research questions, biomass computations will only address soft tissue mass, that is, meat adhering to the skeletal fragments. The use of allometry allows me to provide biomass results which estimates the dietary contribution of usable meat that an animal would have had based on the amount of bone actually present in the archaeological sample (Chaplin 1971: 68; Reitz 1994: 31; Reitz and Wing 1999: 225; Reitz et al. 1987). This is a more reliable estimate of an animal's contribution to the diet than MNI estimates. I use allometric regression to calculate biomass for two reasons. First, this analytical technique can be applied to a wide range of invertebrate classes with the added benefit of making no assumption that the entire animal was

used at the site. Second, it is the best analytical approach with a lower inherent error than other approaches for a small sample size (Reitz and Wing 1999: 222-227).

There is another concern I must address with regard to the determination of usable meat. The culinary desires and dietary needs of the African Caribbean community, based on current and past Caribbean consumption practices, include a variety of soft tissues beyond muscle meat such as tongue, brains, liver, intestines, etc. Because these organs do not adhere to a skeletal element as muscle meat, there is no method to calculate their dietary contribution. Nor can the allometric relationship between bone weight and biomass consider the variation in the density of body parts (i.e., muscle attached to teeth versus internal organs; Landon 2005: 9). Furthermore, in the case of liquid-based dishes such as stews and soups, slow-cooked bone and bone marrow flavor foods and also provide an additional source of nutrition. Some bones can be cooked long enough that they become soft enough to chew and even ingest, leaving no archaeological evidence. Thus, biomass estimates do not account for the consumption of bone, bone marrow, or organs and their relative contribution to the diet. Despite these shortcomings, there is still a significant biological relationship between meat weight and the archaeological specimen, or bone, weight, and so the use of allometric prediction provides a lower error probability than other approaches (Reitz and Wing 1999:227). However, the application of biomass must be understood as merely an estimate of meat weight *related to the archaeological specimen weight identified in the collection*. It cannot be used to explain the total

amount of meat once consumed at a site, because the faunal collection is but a sample of that total (Chaplin 1971:68; Reitz and Wing 1999: 225).

To estimate the possible dietary contribution, that is, the amount of edible or usable skeletal muscle (and body fat) from an animal, I calculated sample biomass based on allometric differences drawn from animal body mass, skeletal mass and skeletal dimensions. The allometric equation applied to all faunal data to state the relationship between body weight and skeletal weight is:

$$Y = aX^b \text{ or } \log_{10} Y = a + b (\log_{10} X)$$

Y = estimated sample biomass (kg) contributed by the archaeological specimen

X = specimen weight (kg) of the archaeological specimen

a = the Y-intercept of the linear regression line

b = slope of the regression line

The allometric constants **a** and **b** for each faunal group (i.e., mammals, birds, osteichthyes, perciform fishes, nonperciform fishes, gastropods, and bivalves) were obtained from Elizabeth Reitz (1994).

Tooth Wear and Aging

Age of an identified species is often estimated by observing the degree of epiphyseal fusion of shaft elements or through tooth eruption and wear (Andrew 1982: 141-53; Noddle 1974: 199; Schmid 1972). However, the majority of the fauna sample was too fragmented to find diagnostic elements. Because teeth vary widely in size and shape within one species, tooth eruption and the state of wear are the most dependable guides for estimating age (Davis 1987; Hillson 1986:5; McCance et al. 1961: 215). When the tooth comes in contact with another substance, whether it is food, cheeks or other teeth, wear occurs. Therefore, analysts strive to make a distinction between attrition, “the formation of well-defined wear facets where teeth meet in chewing, often with line parallel scratches resulting from the abrasives in food” and abrasion, “a more diffuse wear with scratches randomly orientated” (Hillson 1986:183). Permanent cheek teeth formation timing in modern domesticated pigs has been established (see Silver 1969: 250-268) as well as stages in tooth wear (see Hillson 1986: 330), and it is these methods that I used to determine and record ages of mammal specimens.

The fauna assemblage yielded 75 teeth in various states of fragmentation and deterioration. I identified and analyzed teeth from three identifiable domestic animals: pig, cow, and goat. All teeth with age data were examined for enamel wear and tooth eruption to indicate whether the animal was juvenile, sub-adult or adult. In

general, the best-preserved and most abundant teeth in the entire sample were pig teeth (NISP=44) with 28 exhibiting age data.

Modification

Another type of secondary data included to determine subsistence practices was bone modification. Fragmentation and marks on fauna specimens provide taphonomic information based on site formation processes and human activity patterns. Modifications associated with food-related activity, such as butchery marks, provide insights into culinary practices of a particular community (Crader 1990: 705; Landon 1996: 58-95; Lyman 1977; Reitz and Scarry 1985: 84, 86). However, if the fauna element exhibited modifications and yet could not be identified as a potential food source, it was not included for subsistence practice studies. The yard fauna sample of modified elements (NISP=14) provided only three categories. The first modification type were clean breaks across the cancellous bone and this was recorded as “sawed.” These characteristics may relate to secondary butchery practices *vis a vis* specific cuts of meat when saws and cleavers were used to dismember the carcass or remove jointed parts. Another possible reason for sawed bones was to break up bones for marrow or to create meat cuts for stewing (Crader 1990: 706). The second type was identified as having light scores on the surface of bone and was recorded as “cut” marks and may have occurred as either a primary or secondary butchery method to

strip soft tissue from the bone before or after cooking (Lyman 1977). The third modification recorded involved heavy burning that suggests a practice of roasting meats.

Skeletal Part Representation

The final type of secondary data involves body part representation. An analysis of skeletal portions is based on skeletal elements (Reitz and Wing 1999: 205). These elements (i.e., scapulas, hindquarters, and feet) may reflect tool use; demonstrate variations in class, ethnic, racial preferences or economically enforced choices favoring specific cuts of domestic mammals; assist in analytically assessing the quality of meat; or indicate trade and the exchange of live animals and processed meat (Covey and Eissach 2009; Crader 1990; Jolley 1983; Schulz and Gust 1983; Klippel 2001). In some cases the under-representation of certain elements in an assemblage, for example cattle head and feet elements, could be interpreted as a reliance of barreled beef (see Klippel 2001).

When possible, specific body parts were summarized as head elements (teeth, mandible, etc.); forequarters (scapula, etc.); forefeet (carpals, metacarpals); hindquarters (femur, tibia, etc.); hindfeet (tarsals and metatarsals) and feet (phalanges and metapodial). This data would assist in interpreting whether the enslaved and free

laborers had access to high-quality cuts of meat or subsisted on barreled meats and low-quality non-meaty head and feet elements. Unfortunately, most of the bones were too fragmented to provide diagnostic elemental information. Thus, the interpretative value of this secondary data set is limited.

Results of the Analysis

The vertebrate faunal assemblage analyzed for my study was recovered from the excavated units of what we have interpreted to be yard space between three slave houses (Locus 18, 19, and 27; see Figure 4.2).⁴² The assemblage was relatively small and much of the assemblage was highly fragmentary. Recovered from contexts that represent two periods of time, the sample size yielded 1,672 fragments; 8% of the remains could not be identified to the taxonomic level below class. The recovery of highly fragmented faunal remains from plantation sites is very common, due to taphonomic, archaeological, and environmental variables (Reitz 1987). Yet, there is not a rigid standard regarding appropriate sample sizes for zooarchaeological studies of plantation sites. In fact, interpretations of historic assemblages have been based on a variety of sample sizes with varying limitations.⁴³ But like other zooarchaeological

⁴² Faunal remains were recovered inside the house structures as well, however, they were not considered for this analyses.

⁴³ For a comparative understanding of varying sample sizes, here are a few examples of some historic sites in the Caribbean: Clifton Plantation, Bahamas, less than 1,200 fragments from identified animals (Wilkie and Farnsworth 2005); Brimstone Hill Fortress, St. Kitts, 6,000 fragments but only 20% were

studies of historic assemblages, I did consider my sample size, recovery methods, and taphonomic processes before interpreting any patterns. Moreover, my sample size is significant enough for one to draw some interpretations of human consumption choices and patterns.

In this section I begin with a summary of the data representing three temporal contexts: 1) roughly the mid to third quarter of the 18th century, 2) the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and 3) the early 19th century to the first four decades of the 20th century. The summary is then followed by a discussion of my analyses results by period. In the latter, the data recovered from post hole features is excluded due to the very small sample size.

Faunal Remains

Thirty taxa are represented in the assemblage, of which 13 are vertebrate fauna species. These species include a variety of domestic and wild species that were integral to the foodways of both enslaved and free villagers at La Mahaudière (Table

identifiable to taxonomic level below class (see Wilkie and Farnworth 2005: 234 for a comparative discussion); Hacienda el Palenque (sugar plantation), Puerto Rico, over 6,400 fragments but over 50% could not be identified to the taxonomic level below class (Quitmeyer and Kennedy 2001); Drax Hall (plantation), Jamaica: over 4,000 specimens but 40% could not be identified below class; Cinnamon Bay (plantation), United States Virgin Islands, over 4,800 remains of which over 1,400 were not identifiable to class (Sichler 2003).

5.1). The faunal assemblage consisted of 1,672 specimens. Of these, a total of 197.54 minimum number of individuals (MNI) was identified.

Table 5.1 La Mahaudière Slave Village Yard Species List

TAXON	NISP	NISP %	MNI	MNI %	WEIGHT	WEIGHT %	BIOMASS (g)	BIOMASS %
UID Vertebrates	1	-	-	-	0.34	0.01	**	**
UID Mammals	10	1	-	-	1.67	0.05	46.66	0.71
Mammalia (Large mammals)	75	4	-	-	34.93	0.96	727.19	11.10
UID Small Mammals	1	-	-	-	0.1	0.00	**	**
Artiodactyla (cattle, goats, pigs, or sheep)	1	-	-	-	0.55	0.02	15.36	0.23
<i>Rattus</i> sp. (Old World Rat)	1	-	1	0.51	0.08	0.00	**	**
<i>Herpestes auropunctatus</i> (Mongoose)	1	-	1	0.51	0.91	0.03	**	**
<i>Sus scrofa</i> (Pig)	83	5	3	1.52	96.36	2.65	1860.23	28.40
Bovidae (Cattle, goats, or sheep)	2	-	1	0.51	1.85	0.05	48.47	0.74
<i>Bos Taurus</i> (Cow)	12	1	2	1.01	41.95	1.16	835.49	12.76
<i>Capra hircus</i> * (Goat)	123	7	2	1.01	32.91	0.91	21.03	0.32
<i>Gallus gallus</i> (Chicken)	2	-	1	0.51	0.70	0.02	14.76	0.23
Osteichthyes (UID Fish)	2	-	-	-	2.97	0.08	3.97	0.06
Belonidae (Needlefish)	1	-	1	0.51	0.07	0.00	3.03	0.05
<i>Caranx hippos</i> (Crevalle Jack)	1	-	1	0.51	0.13	0.00	2.02	0.03
<i>Albula</i> spp. (Bonefish)	1	-	1	0.51	0.50	0.01	15.49	0.24
UID Marine Invertebrates	48	3	-	-	81.09	2.23	71.62	1.09
Fissurellidae (Turban Snails)	24	1	4	2.02	73.93	2.04	68.37	1.04
Acteonidae (Barrel Bubble Snails)	1	-	1	0.51	0.53	0.01	0.67	0.01
<i>Astraea</i> spp. (Star Snail)	22	1	6	3.04	62.98	1.73	58.90	0.90
<i>Cittarium pica</i> (West Indian Top Shell)	695	42	94	47.58	2517.44	69.33	1806.22	27.58
Strombidae (Conchs)	14	1	-	-	76.96	2.12	69.27	1.06
<i>Strombus</i> spp. (Stromboid Conch)	11	1	2	1.01	101.97	2.81	90.20	1.38
<i>Nerita</i> spp. (Nerite snail)	16	1	6	3.04	13.76	0.38	14.52	0.22
<i>Nerita tessellata</i> (Checkered Nerite)	1	-	1	0.51	1.15	0.03	1.37	0.02

Table 5.1 (continued)

<i>Nerita versicolor</i> (Four-toothed/Variiegated Nerite)	10	1	10	5.06	24.24	0.67	23.87	0.36
<i>Tectarius muricatus</i> (Beaded Periwinkle)	11	1	11	5.57	10.44	0.29	10.96	0.17
Cymatiidae (Tritons)	2	-	1	0.51	3.16	0.09	3.66	0.06
<i>Cypraea</i> spp. (Chestnut Cowrie)	3	-	2	1.01	16.94	0.47	16.97	0.26
<i>Cypraeacassis testiculus</i> (Reticulate Cowrie-helmet)	5	-	1	0.51	26.48	0.73	24.5	0.37
Bivalvia (Bivalves)	1	-	-	-	3.47	0.10	22.15	0.34
Lucinidae (Saltwater clams)	169	10	9	4.56	161.07	4.44	462.81	7.07
Chitonidae (Chitons)	314	19	28.54375	14.45	231.51	6.38	200.97	3.07
TOTAL	1672	100	197.54	100	3631.02	100	6549.13	100

*Biomass derived from one individual as food. The other was commensal.

**Biomass not calculated.

The MNI for domestic mammals (i.e., cow, pig, goat) consist of 4% (n=8) of the assemblage. Only two fragments recovered were identified as chicken (*Gallus gallus*). The unidentified mammal remains were most likely not commensal species and probably contributed to the laborers' diet (Table 5.2). The greatest representation of individuals in the assemblage (93%) is the marine invertebrates that consist of 178.125 individuals. Three individual fish were each identified as a type of needlefish (Belonidae), a kind of bonefish (*Albula* spp.), and crevalle jack (*Caranx hippos*) making up less than 2% of the total MNI. The remaining MNI consists of a mongoose (n=1) and rat (n=1), both commensal species. Thus, nine individual domestic animals

(cow, pig, chicken, and goat) and 178.125 individual marine invertebrates stand out as having contributed the most as faunal food sources.

Table 5.2 Relative Dietary Contribution of Domestic Animals

TAXON	NISP	NISP %	MNI	MNI %	WEIGHT	WEIGHT %	BIOMASS (g)	BIOMASS %
UID								
Mammals	10	3.25	-	-	1.67	0.79	46.66	1.31
Mammalia								
(Large mammals)	75	24.35	-	-	34.93	16.56	727.19	20.37
Artiodactyla								
(cattle, goats, pigs, or sheep)	1	0.32	-	-	0.55	0.26	15.36	0.43
<i>Sus scrofa</i>								
(Pig)	83	26.95	3	33.33	96.36	45.69	1860.23	52.12
Bovidae								
(Cattle, goats, or sheep)	2	0.65	1	11.11	1.85	0.88	48.47	1.36
<i>Bos Taurus</i>								
(Cow)	12	3.90	2	22.22	41.95	19.89	835.49	23.41
<i>Capra hircus</i> *								
(Goat)	123	39.94	2	22.22	32.91	15.60	21.03	0.59
<i>Gallus gallus</i>								
(Chicken)	2	0.65	1	11.11	0.70	0.33	14.76	0.41
TOTAL	308	100	9	100	210.92	100	3569.19	100

*Biomass derived from 1 individual as food. The other was commensal.

The next section discusses the faunal data by temporal context. I begin with the earliest context for slavery (data retrieved from post hole features), then YDII, ending with YDI (the most recent context). For each context, I detail the relative dietary importance (based on MNI and biomass results) of the faunal sample before discussing the secondary data sets of teeth, bone modification and skeletal representations. Lastly, I provide an interpretation of the subsistence strategies for acquiring dietary animal protein for each era.

Early Slave Diet

The results of the analysis of the faunal remains recovered from post hole features, associated with the last half of the 18th century, are based upon a very small sample size with an MNI of 12. As such, the results must be viewed as highly tentative. The evidence suggests that the enslaved laborers at La Mahaudière depended on a combination of wild marine taxa and domestic mammals for animal protein (Table 5.3). During the earliest point of occupation, the only terrestrial contributor for dietary protein was pork. While French historical accounts suggest that (barreled) beef was part of the Caribbean slave diet an examination of the small faunal assemblage retrieved from discreet post hole features strictly associated with the earliest occupation reveals that pigs may have been the only (or the most available) terrestrial meat source during the mid-18th century at La Mahaudière. This may suggest that terrestrial meat intake may have been quite limited. Unfortunately, it is not known if the enslaved laborers were provisioned salted meat or fish or if they were allowed to raise domestic animals. Even so, pigs may have been rationed to the enslaved or raised by them. Furthermore, it appears that beef was not a significant part of the early slave diet on the plantation and was introduced possibly at the end of the 18th century as it only appears in deposits associated with the late 18th-century to early 19th-century artifacts. Even when introduced to their later diet, the skeletal representation evidence suggests the enslaved community consumed lower quality cuts of beef associated with head parts.

Table 5.3 Relative Dietary Importance of 18th-Century Post Hole Features

TAXON	NISP	NISP %	MNI	MNI %	WEIGHT	WEIGHT %	BIOMASS (g)	BIOMASS %
Domestic Mammals	6	15.38	2	16.60	4.22	5.27	143.42	61.20
Fish	2	5.13	1	8.30	0.08	0.10	3.74	1.60
Marine Invertebrates	31	79.49	9.04625	75.10	75.79	94.63	87.20	37.21
TOTAL	39	100	12.0463	100	80.09	100	234.36	100

Although beef did enter the slave diet (possibly towards the last decades of slavery), pork was the staple for terrestrial protein and mostly likely, lower quality cuts of meat dominated the diet. Most pigs were slaughtered at a very young age, with occasional individuals living into adulthood. Butchery marks and other forms of bone modification demonstrate primary butchering processes to separate the pig into various pieces with bones chopped and broken to extract marrow and/or to add to stews. Other modification evidence indicates that the enslaved community also roasted meats as an alternative cooking method to stewing.

Context YDII - Slavery Era

The majority of the slave-related faunal assemblage (i.e., excluding specimens from post holes) came from arbitrary levels of the stratum excavated below YDI levels. I will first discuss the overall relative dietary importance of YDII before I move on to discuss any temporal changes in consumption patterns. Of the 379

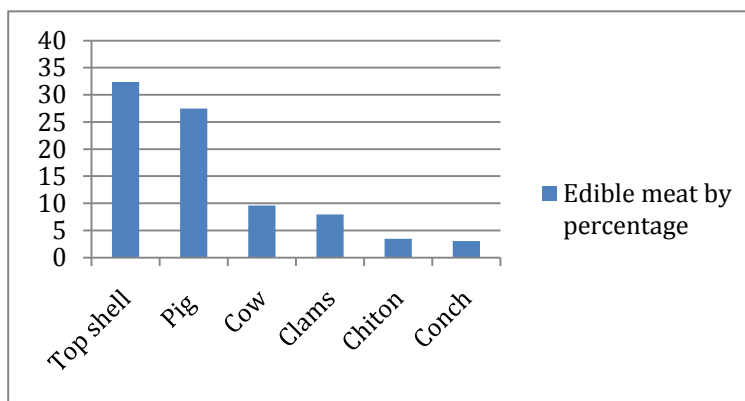
specimens associated with diet in context YDII, 68.37 individuals from domestic and wild sources were identified, demonstrating that the enslaved laborers at La Mahaudière relied on a variety of terrestrial meat, shellfish and occasionally some fish. Although marine invertebrates yielded a high MNI in comparison to the domestic mammals, their usable meat percentage was near equal to their terrestrial counterparts for animal-based protein (Table 5.4) The only identifiable mammal species associated with food during slavery are pig and cow with the former providing the greatest source of terrestrial meat protein for the enslaved community. Overall, West Indian Top Shell was the greatest contributor to enslaved laborers meat-based protein needs (Figure 5.1).

Table 5.4 Relative Dietary Importance of YDII Context

TAXON	NISP	NISP %	MNI	MNI %	WEIGHT	WEIGHT %	BIOMASS (g)	BIOMASS %
UID Mammals	6	1.58	-	-	0.42	0.04	12.87	0.65
Mammalia								
(Large mammals)	16	4.22	-	-	10.41	0.90	228.46	11.60
<i>Sus scrofa</i> (Pig)	24	6.33	2	2.93	24.41	2.12	541.19	27.47
Bovidae (Cattle, goats, or sheep)	1	0.26	1	1.46	1.38	0.12	35.15	1.78
<i>Bos Taurus</i> (Cow)	2	0.53	1	1.46	7.13	0.62	154.09	7.82
Osteichthyes								
(UID Fish)	2	0.53	-	-	2.97	0.26	3.97	0.20
Belonidae								
(Needlefish)	1	0.26	1	1.46	0.07	0.01	3.03	0.15
<i>Caranx hippos</i> (Crevalle Jack)	1	0.26	1	1.46	0.13	0.01	2.02	0.10
UID Marine								
Invertebrates	4	1.06	-	-	1.51	0.13	1.85	0.09
Fissurellidae								
(Marine Limpets)	5	1.32	4	5.85	1.89	0.16	2.16	0.11
Turbinidae								
(Turban Snails)	6	1.58	2	2.93	12.93	1.12	13.43	0.68
Acteonidae								
(Barrel Bubble Snails)	1	0.26	1	1.46	0.53	0.05	0.67	0.03
<i>Astraea</i> spp. (Star Snail)	10	2.64	4	5.85	33.73	2.93	30.85	1.57
<i>Cittarium pica</i> (West Indian Top Shell)	148	39.05	36	52.65	852.56	74.01	638.38	32.40
Strombidae								
(Conchs)	1	0.26	-	-	2.96	0.26	3.26	0.17
<i>Strombus</i> spp. (Stromboid Conch)	8	2.11	1	1.46	65.44	5.68	56.31	2.86
<i>Nerita</i> spp. (Nerite snail)	3	0.79	1	1.46	4.13	0.36	4.43	0.22
<i>Cypraea</i> spp. (Chestnut Cowrie)	1	0.26	1	1.46	13.03	1.13	12.76	0.65
Lucinidae								
(Saltwater clams)	44	11.61	4	5.85	41.21	3.58	156.96	7.97
Chitonidae								
(Chitons)	95	25.07	8.37	12.24	75.07	6.52	68.27	3.47
Domestic Taxa	49	12.93	4	5.85	43.75	3.81	971.76	49.33
Wild Taxa	330	87.07	64.40	94.15	1105.2	96.19	998.34	50.67
TOTAL	379	100	68.37	100	1151.9	100	1970.10	100

Note: This excludes rat (n=1), mongoose (n=1), goat (n=122) (associated with non-subsistence oriented feature), and small unidentified mammal (n=1) that are most likely commensal species. Total = 504 (this includes everything).

Figure 5.1 Most Important Dietary Contributors of YDII by Animal Class



There are additional taxa in the slave-related sample that were not consumed, including one mongoose and over 100 elements of one complete young goat.

Although the mongoose is a commensal species, originally introduced to the Lesser Antilles for rodent control, goats were often kept as a source for milk and meat.

However, the 122 elements of a juvenile goat excavated in the yard were associated with a burned, non-food related feature discussed in the preceding chapter. Further discussions of goats as a food source will be reserved for inter-site comparisons in Chapter 7.

Teeth

As I stated above in “Methods”, for tooth wear and bone modification the majority of the fauna sample was too fragmented to find diagnostic elements. Of the 75 teeth retrieved from the yard assemblage, 27 are associated with YDII (Table 5.5). Eleven teeth are associated with pigs from juvenile, sub-adult, and adult age groups. All cow teeth from this period were too fragmentary to be analyzed for age data and, therefore, were unavailable for age determination. There were 17 goat teeth (associated with one animal) from a very young specimen. In general, the age data on the domestic animal teeth from YDII reveals that many of the teeth had little to no tooth enamel wear. Only two pig teeth showed wear that exposed the dentine. This data suggests that most pigs were slaughtered at a very young age, with occasional individuals living into adulthood. The data on goats is somewhat more difficult to assess. All goat teeth with age data from the slavery contexts were associated in and around a burned feature. The entire skeletal remains were present. The presence of unerupted teeth, teeth with no tooth enamel wear, and unfused bones demonstrated that the goat was very young at the time of its death and was not consumed for food but burned whole.

Table 5.5 YDII Teeth and Age Class

Taxon	Juvenile	Sub-adult	Adult
Pig	6	3	2
Cow	n/a	n/a	n/a
Goat	16	1	-
Total	22	4	2

Note: **n/a** represents the possible presence of a specimen without available data.

Modification

This heavily fractured sample had limited interpretive values. Only three taxa that demonstrated modification associated with subsistence practices were unidentified as large mammal, pig, and West Indian Top Shell (Table 5.6). The YDII context yielded only one element with butchery marks: a sawed pig fragment. The high fragmentation of pig bones in general may also suggest that bones were chopped and broken to extrapolate marrow and/or to add to stews. Two elements of a large domestic animal were associated with extensive burn marks, a possible indicator of roasting. Interestingly, two West Indian Top Shell elements (the only marine faunal remains recovered with modification marks) were also burned. As it is unlikely that shellfish were roasted, this evidence suggests that the shells were burned with other refuse.

Table 5.6 YDII Modifications of Faunal Remains

Taxon	Sawed	Burned	Heavily Burned
Large mammal	-	-	2
Pig	1	-	-
West Indian Top Shell		2	-
Total	1	2	2

Skeletal Representation

High fragmentation restricted the identification of skeletal elements.

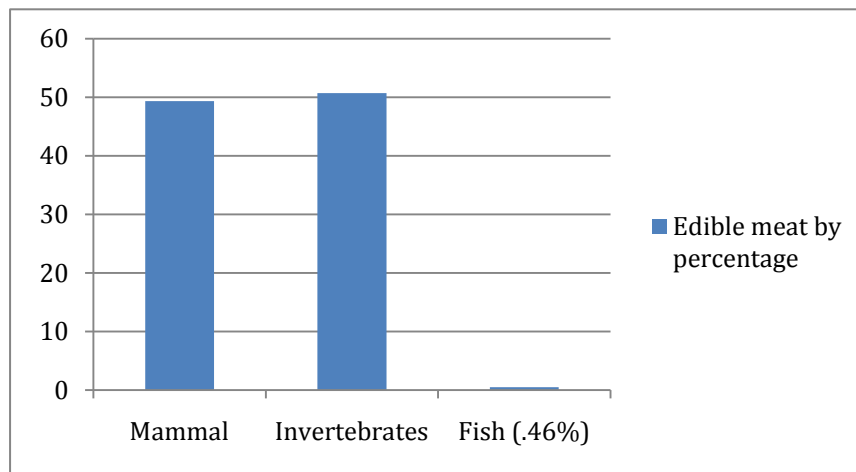
However, there were enough identifiable specimens to make limited interpretations of the remains. Of the 21 identified elements from cow and pig taxa, all were associated with head parts only (Table 5.7). The data indicates that the enslaved community was subsisting on pigs and cows, possibly raised on the plantation but certainly butchered locally. While it is currently unknown if barreled beef was a substantial part of the slave diet, zooarchaeological evidence suggests that local beef, if only the low-quality cuts, are associated with the last decades of slavery.

Table 5.7 YDII Summary of Faunal Elements

Taxon	Head	Foot
Pig	19	-
Cow	2	-
Total	21	-

Over time, the enslaved laborers' consumption patterns might have changed. The evidence from post holes versus YDII suggests that they grew more dependent on wild marine taxa. When examining the faunal assemblage recovered from YDII, the percentages of biomass between marine invertebrates and domestic animals reveal some interesting results. Although the NISP (n= 49) and MNI (n=4) for domestic mammals are extremely low when compared with the marine invertebrates, the percentage of meat protein contribution from the domestic mammals via biomass (49.33%) is nearly equal to that of the marine food sources (Figure 5.2). This suggests that a combination of cultural preference, plantation management, and environmental factors were at work in influencing enslaved foodways. Because of the likely limited access to terrestrial meat, the location of the site near the ocean, and the enslaved community's active and conscious participation in foodways (including making dietary choices and developing the skills and knowledge to acquire foodstuffs), marine species increasingly played an important role in their cuisine from the second half of the 18th century to the mid-19th century.

Figure 5.2 Domestic Animals vs. Marine Food Sources for YDII



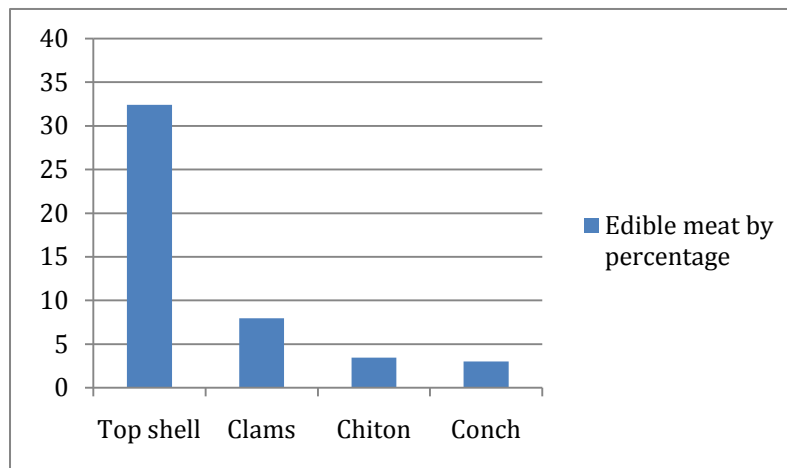
Marine Sources

As stated earlier, the zooarchaeological evidence reflects a heavy reliance on marine sources for animal protein during slavery. While there were two fish bones present in the earliest slave context the majority of YDII's fauna taxa identified to the taxonomic level of class and lower ($n=11$) were marine invertebrates. More importantly, all of the invertebrate species were collected and consumed specifically for food. This is not surprising considering that the plantation lies 2.2 km (1.37 miles) to the west of the island's coastline. The shore is a rough landscape without significant beach land but does have sufficient rocky, intertidal zones to collect various shellfish during low tide.

The enslaved community took advantage of a variety of marine invertebrates including molluscs such as chitons, gastropods, and a variety of bivalves (clams,

mussels, and oysters). According to the data, the West Indian Top Shell (*Cittarium pica*) was the most heavily exploited shellfish, providing the richest and most abundant source of meat. Other shellfish taxa that had a significant presence in the faunal assemblage included clams, chitons, and to a lesser extent, the conch (Figure 5.3).⁴⁴

Figure 5.3 Most Significant Marine Invertebrate Food Sources for YDII



Only a few fish remains are also represented in the post hole and YDII assemblages, although this may be less the result of the level at which they were exploited and more a matter of our recovery techniques.⁴⁵ Zooarchaeological evidence suggests that fish was present in the slave diet as early as the mid-to-late

⁴⁴ Conch, the most abundant source of meat (Randall 1964) appears to be underrepresented in the faunal assemblage when compared with other Caribbean prehistoric and historic sites. One reason may be that the shoreline near La Mahaudière is not the animal's usual habitat (i.e., sandy and/or seagrass flats and coral reefs of shallow depths generally less than 70 feet; Berg 1976). It may also be that conch shell was not discarded but rather kept for reuse.

⁴⁵ As stated earlier, very few samples were taken for flotation, a technique that often yields a greater number of fish, small bird and mammal remains.

18th century but they were of minor importance overall. Of the YDII context, a needlefish element was identified while another could only be identified as a bony fish species. Even though I could not determine whether or not the fish represented salted fish provisions, with the island coastline located so close to the plantation, it is highly probable that fishing was an intensive activity for local inhabitants. Unlike fishing, which is a skilled activity and requires time and patience, the gathering of shellfish is a low-level skill that takes little time and could be performed by nearly all members of the community, from young to old and most likely by those who were not required to work the longest hours at their daily tasks. Thus, while the distribution of salted meat and fish provisions were often reported to be low or irregular (Munford 1991, vol. 3: 615), and some did not have the opportunity to raise livestock, the potential for adequate animal protein was always available nearby. The biomass percentage for marine invertebrates slightly surpasses that for domestic animals in this YDII sample, and therefore demonstrates a significant contribution of edible meat protein to the slave diet. The enslaved community of La Mahaudière took full advantage to gather as much shellfish to not only supplement their nutritional needs but also to diversify the tastes and textures of their meals – an opportunity not available on other plantations too far from the coastline or major waterways.

Context YDI- From the Last Decades of Slavery through the Post-Slavery Era

Context YDI, again, represents approximately the years starting from the 1810s and ending in the first four decades of the 20th century. As such, the faunal remains retrieved from this context can tell us about changes in foodways practices over time, when compared with the earlier faunal samples, but it was impossible to attribute these changes to transformations that occurred at the site due to emancipation (since the YDI assemblage probably contains specimens from the latter slave era). What can be stated is that after slavery was abolished, blacks continued to live and work at La Mahaudière as free laborers. As a result, there would have been some continuity in their foodways. Yet following emancipation, blacks lived and worked alongside a small number of Indian indentured workers until the early decades of the 20th century. Their entry onto the plantation may have influenced the existing foodways customs.

The faunal assemblage associated with this time period reveals taxa very similar to those found in the slave-era assemblage, yet there are also additional taxa present (Table 5.8). This includes two taxa, the first being two elements from the domestic chicken (*Gallus gallus*), the only bird represented in the entire yard assemblage, and an element from the *Albula* genus, a bonefish species found in reefs. There are also five additional marine invertebrate taxa (n=16) in the YDI sample above the number of marine taxa of the slave-related sample (n=11). As for domestic

mammal taxa, pig and cow are present again, however, goat is not a commensal species in this context. Only one element could not be identified to the taxonomic level of class but was identified as part of a vertebrate animal.

Table 5.8 Relative Dietary Importance of YDI Context

TAXON	NISP	NISP %	MNI	MNI %	WEIGHT	WEIGHT %	BIOMASS (g)	BIOMASS %
UID Mammals	4	0.34	-	-	1.25	0.05	33.79	0.74
Mammalia (Large mammals)	59	5.06	-	-	24.52	1.00	498.73	10.89
Artiodactyla (cattle, goats, pigs, or sheep)	1	0.09	-	-	0.55	0.02	15.36	0.34
<i>Sus scrofa</i> (Pig)	59	5.06	1	0.79	71.95	2.94	1319.04	28.81
Bovidae (Cattle, goats, or sheep)	1	0.09	-	0	0.47	0.02	13.33	0.29
<i>Bos Taurus</i> (Cow)	10	0.86	1	0.79	34.82	1.42	681.40	14.88
<i>Capra hircus</i> * (Goat)	1	0.09	1	0.79	0.78	0.03	21.03	0.46
<i>Gallus gallus</i> (Chicken)	2	0.17	1	0.79	0.70	0.03	14.76	0.32
<i>Albula</i> spp. (Bonefish)	1	0.09	1	0.79	0.50	0.02	15.49	0.34
UID Marine Invertebrates	44	3.77	-	-	79.58	3.25	69.77	1.52
Fissurellidae								
Marine Limpets)	3	0.26	3	2.38	5.99	0.24	6.24	0.14
Turbinidae (Turban Snails)	18	1.54	2	1.59	61.00	2.49	54.94	1.20
<i>Astraea</i> spp. (Star Snail)	12	1.03	2	1.59	29.25	1.20	28.05	0.61
<i>Cittarium pica</i> (West Indian Top Shell)	547	46.87	58	45.97	1664.88	68.08	1167.84	25.50
Strombidae (Conchs)	13	1.11	-	-	74	3.03	66.01	1.44
<i>Strombus</i> spp. (Stromboid Conch)	3	0.26	1	0.79	36.53	1.49	33.89	0.74
<i>Nerita</i> spp. (Nerite snail)	13	1.11	5	3.96	9.63	0.39	10.09	0.22
<i>Nerita tessellata</i> (Checkered Nerite)	1	0.09	1	0.79	1.15	0.05	1.37	0.03
<i>Nerita versicolor</i> (Four-toothed/Variegated Nerite)	10	0.86	10	7.93	24.24	0.99	23.87	0.52
<i>Tectarius muricatus</i> (Beaded Periwinkle)	11	0.94	11	8.72	10.44	0.43	10.96	0.24
Cymatiidae (Tritons)	2	0.17	1	0.79	3.16	0.13	3.66	0.08
<i>Cypraea</i> spp. (Chestnut Cowrie)	2	0.17	1	0.79	3.91	0.16	4.22	0.09
<i>Cypraeacassis testiculus</i> (Reticulate Cowrie-helmet)	5	0.43	1	0.79	26.48	1.08	24.5	0.54
Bivalvia (Bivalves)	1	0.09	-	-	3.47	0.14	22.15	0.48

Table 5.8 (continued)

Lucinidae (Saltwater clams)	125	10.71	5	3.96	119.86	4.90	305.85	6.68
Chitonidae (Chitons)	219	18.77	20.1725	15.99	156.44	6.40	132.7	2.90
Domestic Taxa	137	11.74	4	3.17	135.04	5.52	2597.44	56.72
Wild Taxa	1030	88.26	122.173	96.83	2310.51	94.48	1981.60	43.28
TOTAL	1167	100	126.17	100	2445.55	100	4579.04	100

Teeth

From the YDI contexts, seventeen pig teeth were from young animals, either sub-adult or juveniles (Table 5.9). This data suggests that pigs were slaughtered at a very young age, with occasional individuals living into adulthood. Conversely, two cow teeth of this period exhibited age data indicating sub-adult while one cow tooth, from an adult, showed wear that exposed the dentine, suggesting cows most likely were slaughtered sometimes between juvenile and adult stages of growth. Although goat elements are present in the YDI context assemblage, no goat teeth with age data were retrieved and thus, no conclusions can be made at this time.

Table 5.9 YDI Teeth and Age Class

Taxon	Juvenile	Sub- adult	Adult
Pig	14	3	-
Cow	0	2	1
Goat	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total	14	5	1

Modification

Although the YDI sample of modified elements is small in number (NISP= 9), YDI yielded more modified elements than YDII, but also a greater variety of modification types (Table 5.10). There are saw modifications on pig and cow retrieved from this context. Moreover, the assemblage revealed pig elements with all three modification categories: sawed, cut, and burned. The only evidence of cut marks on bone in the entire yard assemblage is from three pig elements. This heavily fractured sample, which limited species identification much of the time, does suggest that food preparation was often associated with stews and soups. As found in slavery era assemblage of YDII, evidence of burned pig fragments from the YDI assemblage suggests that roasting continued to be an alternative cooking method.

Table 5.10 YDI Modifications of Faunal Remains

Taxon	Sawed	Cut Mark	Heavily Burned
Pig	3	3	2
Cow	1	-	-
Total	4	3	2

Skeletal Part Representation

High fragmentation of the YDI assemblage also restricted the identification of skeletal elements, however, limited interpretations were possible. In all, 40 elements

associated with pig, cow, cattle, and goat were identified (Table 5.11).⁴⁶ Cow, cattle, and goat elements were from the head and ribs, and we recovered head fragments from pigs. The presence of pork rib and head suggest the availability of low and higher quality cuts of meat.

Table 5.11 YDI Summary of Faunal Elements

Taxon	Head	Foot	Rib
Pig	24	-	7
Cattle	1	-	-
Cow	7	-	-
Goat	1	-	-
Total	33	-	7

Circa Post-1810s Diet

When one compares the values associated with marine invertebrates versus domestic animals, a shift in subsistence strategies over time (from YDII to YDI) becomes apparent. The domestic taxa contributed 56% of usable meat to the site occupants' diet. This is a reversal of the result for the slave-era assemblage, and suggests a distinct change in access to certain foods and dietary choices. There some other changes in the more recent subsistence strategies. As stated earlier, chicken became part of the diet, indicating a slight variation in the consumption of domestic

⁴⁶ I use the term 'cattle' as an undefined taxon for an animal from the Bovidae family that may have been cow.

species over time. There is also one goat element represented indicating that goat was a new dietary choice.⁴⁷

As during the 18th century, pig continued afterwards to be the most popular terrestrial food source while beef consumption increased 5% for the site occupants to become the third most important source for dietary protein. Pigs were slaughtered at a very young age and unlike the YDII evidence, no adult individuals were slaughtered for consumption. Cows most likely were slaughtered sometime between juvenile and adult stages of growth. As found in the YDII assemblage, modification evidence indicates that stewing and roasting were persistent cooking traditions over the years. As it was for the 18th-century enslaved community, the data suggests low-quality cuts of meat for those who occupied the site later, however, the presence of pork rib fragments suggest some new choices or allowances for higher cuts of meat. Overall, the meat protein contribution from the domestic mammals based on biomass increased nearly 10 % during the 19th century (Figure 5.4). This may indicate that during the last years of slavery, people were able to raise livestock and/or had better means to purchase meat or had less opportunity for acquiring marine resources. Perhaps a more likely explanation is that the change occurred after emancipation when free laborers, left to subsist on their own, raised livestock and/or used their wages to buy meat. In either case, this evidence suggests that following the 18th

⁴⁷ Although the goat elements of the slave-era assemblage were part of a commensal animal, it should be noted that goats were probably used for their meat during slavery, as well as after, but the faunal evidence for La Mahaudière is lacking.

century, communities relied less so on the marine-based protein to supplement their diets (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.4 Percentages of Pig and Cow Contributions by Context

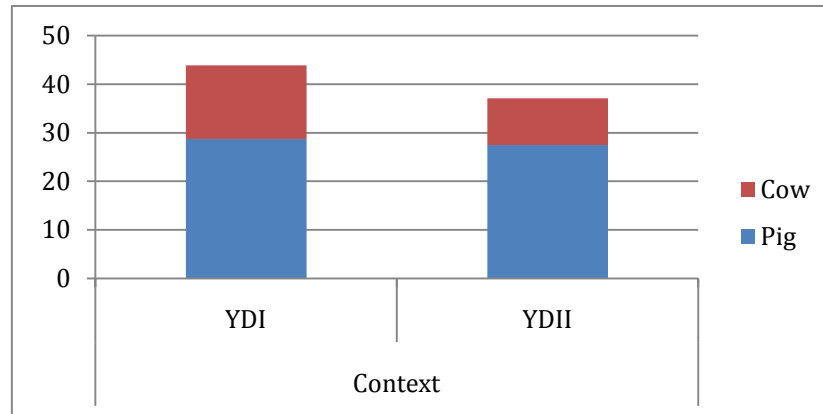
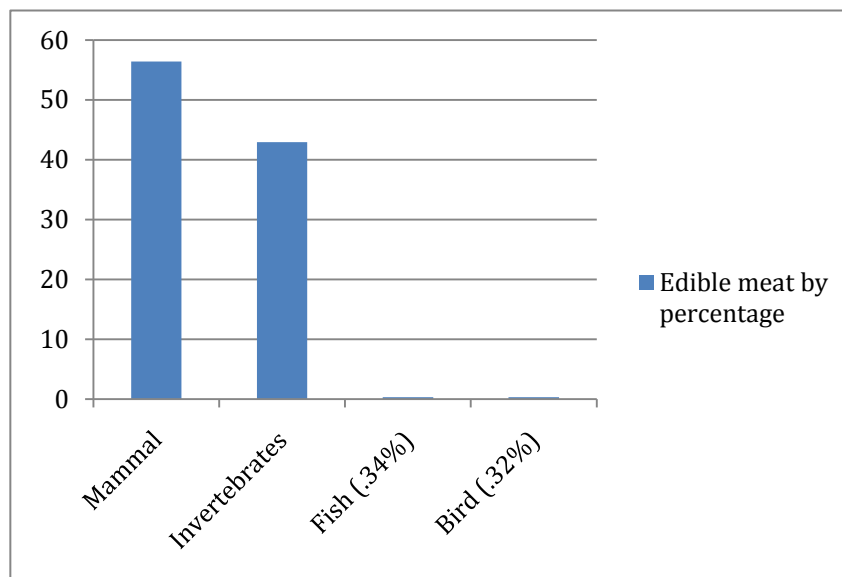
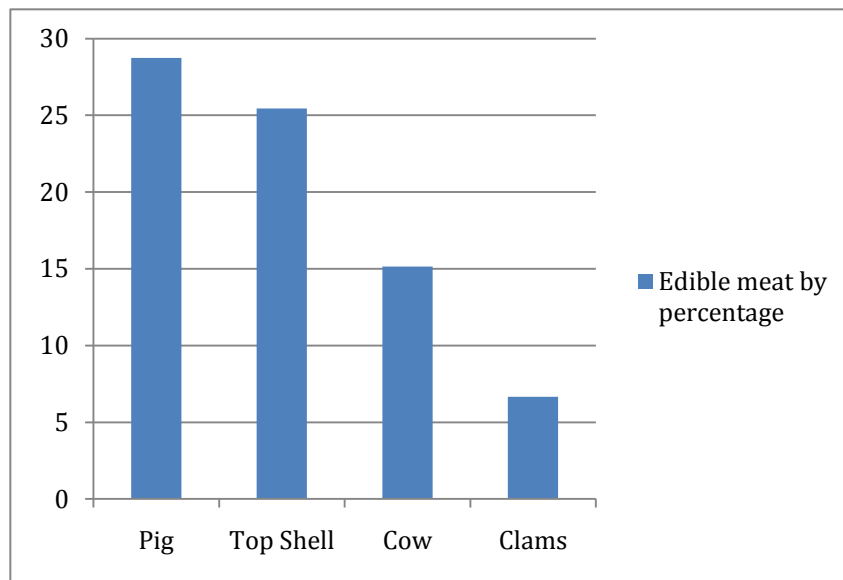


Figure 5.5 Domestic Animals vs. Marine Food Sources for YDI



Furthermore, pig surpassed West Indian Top Shell as the greatest contributor to dietary protein (Figure 5.6). While site occupants' dependence on marine sources appears to have been diminished slightly, the top four shellfish remain the West Indian Top Shell (*Cittarium pica*) as the most heavily exploited shellfish, then clams, chitons, and the conch. This is in the same order of biomass contribution as it was during the 18th-century slavery era, indicating a reproduction of creolized foodways even when transformations were surely occurring on the plantation (e.g., emancipation, entry of Tamil workforce). The additional species included a variety of nerites, periwinkles, and coweries, all of which are also found in the same intertidal zones as the previously mentioned taxa. This demonstrates a continued tradition of exploiting aquatic food but also points to people further diversifying their cuisine. That is, the picture of creolized foodways that is emerging is one that has some stability coupled with dynamicity. With respect to cooking methods, butchering practices, and the content of the diet (marine and domestic species), the everyday fare that the community consumed was imbued with heritage and tradition. It was already a custom for over a generation at the site by the time that the YDI faunal remains were deposited. Yet the YDI evidence indicates that introducing new foods (e.g., nerites and periwinkles) obtained from habitats that were deeply familiar to many site inhabitants was acceptable, perhaps even welcome.

Figure 5.6 Most Important Dietary Contributors of YDI by Animal Class



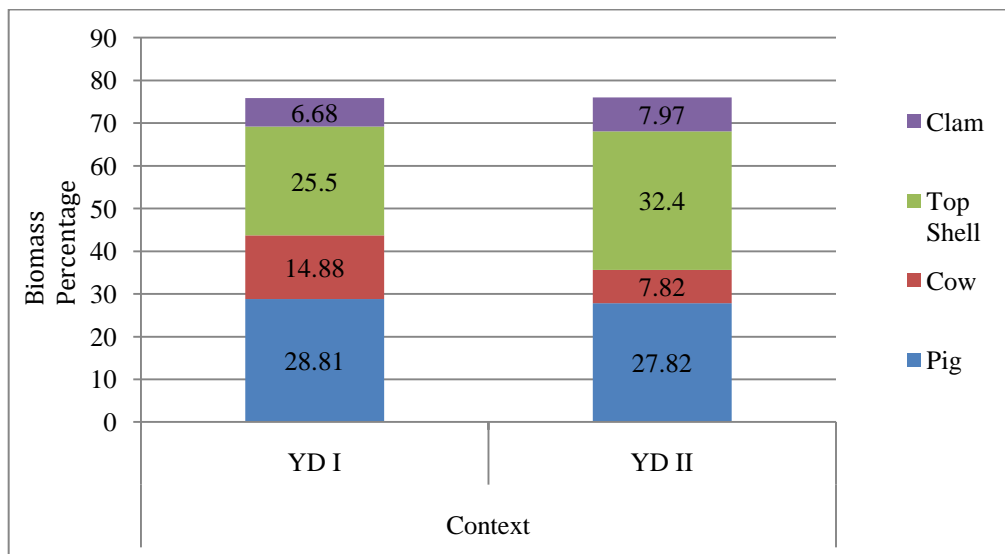
Remarks

In an effort to build a comprehensive knowledge of slave foodways at La Mahaudière, I examined houseyard samples of the slave village to find evidence for food remains and subsistence practices. I conclude this chapter with a summary of my faunal analysis and results. The faunal specimens recovered from test units in the yard space between three slave houses are relatively small in number (NISP=1672) and highly fragmented. Fragmentation limited the degree to which certain analyses could be carried out. Primary data based on the assemblage included number of identifiable specimens (NISP) and weight determinations were in grams. Despite the high bone fragmentation, only 8% of the remains could not be identified to the

taxonomic level below class, which still provided comparable evidential data as to which terrestrial or marine animals were procured for sustenance. Secondary data included the analysis of butchering techniques, age data from teeth, and allometry to ensure a proper quantification of the sample in my efforts to interpret the use of animals throughout the history of the occupation of the slave village. Employing tooth wear and bone modification data proved to be a difficult task with much of the bones recovered in a fragmentary condition. The condition of the fauna also made assessments of epiphyseal fusion limited and was rarely used to determine age. Instead, the teeth of pigs, goat, and cattle provided a better means for assessing age at the time of butchering. Of the secondary data, skeletal representation was the most problematic and which severely limited my interpretations. Despite these biases, several intriguing generalities about subsistence strategies and changes in dietary choices over time for the La Mahaudière site inhabitants were recognized.

It appears that the inhabitants of the slave village both during and after slavery relied heavily on a combination of terrestrial and marine fauna for their protein intake. During both temporal contexts, the pig (YDI: 28.81%; YDII: 27.82%) and the West Indian Top Shell (YDI: 25.50%; YDII: 32.40%) were the highest biomass contributions to La Mahaudière village diets. The other taxa that contributed no less than 7% of usable meat included cow and clams (Figure 5.7).

Figure 5.7 Greatest Contributions by Taxon



The NISPs and MNIs of domestic animals are consistently low for both the YDI and YDII assemblages when compared with marine invertebrates. Although there are some commensal animals present only in the YDII assemblage (i.e., mongoose and goat), most of the terrestrial specimens were consumed as meat sources by both the enslaved and free communities (including goat for the latter context). Moreover, while the MNI estimate suggests that domestic animals may not have been plentiful in number, the biomass percentage represents roughly half (49.33) of the proportional estimate of meat protein to that of marine invertebrates' contribution during slavery in the 18th century. Beef does not appear to have been part of the diet from the onset of slave occupation at La Mahaudière, however, by the last decades of the era beef contributed a significant amount of meat protein.

Furthermore, burned, cut, and hack marks found on bones from juvenile animals, coupled with the limited evidence of skeletal representation of predominantly low-quality meat from head parts, suggest that the subsistence activities were located near or at the slave village with the residents most likely participating in animal husbandry.

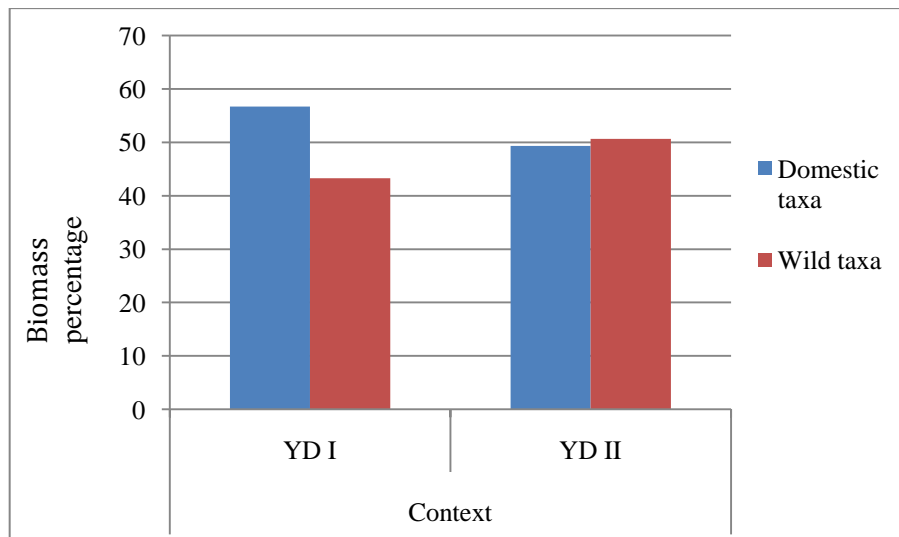
The most abundant animals, with regard to MNI estimates, encountered in the total sample are fish and shellfish taxa ($n=186.573$). In contrast to the evidence related to domestic animals, the procuring of marine taxa was part of subsistence activities that took place away from the village site. In particular, the West Indian Top Shell represented more individuals than any other taxon in the sample, and of the wild taxa, it had the highest percentage of biomass for both the YDI and YDII assemblages.

While the West Indian Top Shell is the best represented taxon in the sample, the evidence of other marine specimens suggests that through slavery and following abolition, people intensively exploited a wide variety of marine animals including molluscs, chitons, gastropods, and bivalves with the occasional evidence of hunting fish that are often found near shore and in shallow sand flats. It was surprising that conch, which has the highest meat yield for shellfish, did not demonstrate a strong representation in this sample. However, it is most likely that the residents of the village did not dispose of the shell as readily as they did with other gastropods found

throughout the sheet-like midden in the village yard space. Rather, the conch shell was probably recycled for other purposes or processed off site.

The diets of those free and enslaved depended on a combination of domestic animals and marine sources for dietary protein. Various analyses of secondary data suggest that both groups used similar subsistence strategies, consumed the same animals, and even incorporated comparable food preparation and cooking methods. The differences between the two diets may lie in the exploitation of domestic animals versus wild taxa. During 18th-century slavery, marine invertebrates contributed 50.67 % of the total biomass. In contrast, the biomass estimates for the YDI assemblage suggest that terrestrial meat rose in consumption (the biomass estimate is 56.72) in the diet (Figure 5.8). Given the continued exploitation of marine resources, however, rather than conclude that domestic animals were preferred over marine species, I suggest that 19th- and 20th-century site inhabitants likely had more and better opportunities for acquiring and consuming cow and pig.

Figure 5.8 Comparisons of Food Sources during YDI and YDII Contexts



Another observation regarding the YDI assemblage is that site occupants' marine-based diet became more diversified. For the YDII assemblage, only 13 marine taxa were identified to the taxonomical level of family with 12 distinct marine species. For the YDI sample, people continued to exploit the same habitats but we recovered remains from 17 taxa, including 16 distinct marine species.

This increase in marine food variety occurred with terrestrial animals as well, with the presence of goat and chicken in the YDII assemblage. While one goat is present in the earlier assemblage, this particular individual was not consumed, in contrast to the goat element from the YDII sample. As observed above, domestic animals contributed a larger proportion of meat protein to the 19th- and 20th-century diets than did marine invertebrates. The dominance of pork consumption continued as

the eating of beef increased throughout the second half of the 19th century. This was due mainly to the fact that the YDI assemblage represents evidence both for diets during and after slavery, it is difficult to explain the rise in domestic animal consumption after the 18th century. The explanations could include any or all of the following: an increase in planter rations, a rise in animal husbandry at the village, or people possessed better means for purchasing meat at the local market than during the 18th century. Nor can we rule out the role of culture in provoking dietary changes as the introduction of chicken and goat and the increase in pig and beef consumption may suggest that domestic species came to play a larger role in the foodways of the plantation community.

Final Thoughts

In comparison with other zooarchaeological studies of historic sites (Armstrong 1990; Crader 1990; Otto 1984; Pulsipher 1994; Reitz 1994; Reitz et al. 1985; Reitz and Scarry 1985; Sichler 2003), this faunal sample, especially when the MNIs are considered, is small. However, I re-emphasize that my analysis is based only on the fauna recovered during the excavation seasons of 2001-2005. While small sample sizes are not uncommon in zooarchaeological analyses, there are some inherent shortcomings such as the possibility of an exaggerated effect on MNI when compared to the MNI estimates for larger sample sizes. For this reason, I chose an

allometric approach to prevent the skewing of estimates. Because the sample size is small, I cannot state whether the taxa identified are a complete representation of available food sources for the enslaved communities and the free laborers. Rather, I chose to include allometric data to emphasize biomass for interpreting the meat protein contribution to their diets from what evidence was currently available. My findings are just a preliminary step in the study of mainly Afro-Caribbean foodways and suggest some intriguing insights of slave and free laborer subsistence practices under French colonial rule on Guadeloupe. The results are promising enough to suggest that more samples should be analyzed from clearly defined houseyards in order to arrive at a more accurate reconstruction of what the enslaved and free laborer communities consumed.

In the end, the faunal data from the site remains the one line of evidence available that speaks specifically to what was consumed at La Mahaudiere. The evidence points to a number of factors that influenced the production of a foodways system that likely had its origins during the Middle Passage (see Chapter 6), and that was probably at least partially representative of a broader practice of foodways across the island and among both blacks and whites. The environment and available resources, the opportunities to travel away from the plantation in search of wild species, the skills and knowledge needed to fish, and the varying levels of accessibility to different animals (including through rations and at market) are all factors that played a role in the shaping of dietary choices. I refer to “choice” to

underscore the active role that individuals and communities played in the decision-making process of constructing the content and form of their foodways. After all, while this chapter focused on what was present in the assemblage, the absences are telling as well. For example, lobsters would have been plentiful on the coastline near the plantation, but none were found within the total assemblage. People simply did not consume all of the edible meat protein available to them, as the presence of commensal species within the assemblage serves as a case in point.

Drawing from creolite, which argues for a Creole identity that is constitutive of various histories and cultures, it is clear from the faunal remains that the diets representing both the slavery and post emancipation eras relied heavily upon species historically consumed by Amerindians (marine species) and Europeans (pigs and cows). While we did not recover evidence at the site for what the slaveowning family or white overseers consumed, the secondary data (butchery marks, evidence of low-quality meat cuts) and high frequency of hollow forms for ceramics (see Chapter 4) suggest that the Africans and native-born blacks engaged in food preparation methods and ate meat cuts that differed from Europeans. Importantly, the theory of creolite argues that resistance and Creole identity are encoded in everyday practices (see Chapter 2). If this is the case, the dietary choices practiced by La Mahaudiere's inhabitants would have served as a vehicle for socializing individuals into the community's collective identity as Creoles. In terms of resistance, we may never know the extent to which people courted punishment in leaving the plantation in

order to collect shellfish or to fish, the perseverance it took to cobble together enough money to purchase specific kinds of meat needed for a familiar dish, or the bravery it took to negotiate the rights to raise livestock and gardens under the yoke of slavery. Yet foodways was one of the areas within which the enslaved and later free communities had some degree of control in defining how it was practiced.

The next chapter examines French historical sources to chronicle the complex dietary pattern of the enslaved communities according to observers and slave owners throughout the colonial period of the French Antilles. I also trace a historical timeline of some major foodstuff importation, items that would become essential to slave foodways and for the diets of free laborers. Thus, the discussion of foodways continues but within a much broader context, and in contrast to the evidence associated directly with the site inhabitants, the historical sources bring in the perspectives of outsiders. I hope that together, the various lines of evidence (faunal remains, ceramics, and historical sources) are sufficient enough to reconstruct the foodways system of La Mahaudiere, especially during slavery.

CHAPTER VI:

CULINARY LANDSCAPES IN THE FRENCH WEST INDIES

In my attempt to examine the articulation of Creole identity through every day practices of foodways, the last chapter detailed the analysis of the zooarchaeological evidence for subsistence practices on La Mahaudière while this chapter will examine the historical evidence for slave foodways. As I try to establish links between women, foodways, and the formation of a Creole identity, particularly an African Guadeloupean identity, my study of primary and secondary sources reveal that many of them fail to consider gender. As I stated in Chapter 2, many interpretations of French Creole identity production are typically male-centered. I liken the early historical accounts and the secondary sources based upon them of the French Antilles as related to the more prominent theories of Creole identity and culture.⁴⁸ Moreover, while historical texts on the subject of slavery in the French Antilles largely demonstrate androcentric tendencies, my argument goes beyond gender representation. Women were a significant part of the slave community as evidenced by the literature on the gendered division of plantation labor and enslaved women's experiences in Chapter 3. I look to my theoretical framework of a feminized *créolité* in reading critically the historic documents in order to contemplate women's roles in Creole foodways.

⁴⁸ Notable exceptions include Gautier (1985), Moitt (2001), and to a lesser extent Kafka (1997), Sainte-Rose (1985), and Socolow (1997).

Before proceeding with a discussion of the literature, it must be noted that the sources are not specifically representative of Guadeloupe, or for the time period that is the focus of this research (i.e., from the mid-18th to the mid-19th centuries). A number of the primary sources (e.g., DuTertre 1979; Labat 1742, 1931, 1970) date back to the 1600s, decades prior to the establishment of La Mahaudiere as a sugar plantation and the height of slavery on the island. Moreover, a number of the sources focus on the after 1750 on St. Domingue and Martinique (e.g., Moreau de Saint-Mèry 1958), which during the 18th century had the most successful plantation-based economy in the Caribbean, and a population of 600,000 enslaved blacks (compared to the 90,000 who lived on Guadeloupe). Thus, what is related below in terms of slave alimentation, what foods were most commonly consumed, imported, or grown regularly, and in general, what constituted enslaved Creole foodways according to these sources may not reflect the case for Guadeloupe. Still, these primary and secondary sources are useful for reconstructing a broader portrait of enslaved foodways within which to consider what resources, food preparation methods, etc., that La Mahaudiere's inhabitants may have made use of.

There is a general consensus that slave nourishment and general diet in the Caribbean was problematic (Dirks 1987; Dunn 2004: 163; Kiple 1984; Pilcher 2000: 1278-1288). The island colonies of the French West Indies acknowledge similar challenges so much so that food for the enslaved laborers became a central issue of struggle according to various historical documents. Despite the laws enacted

requiring the planter class to supply food for the enslaved population, problems were present from the beginning of intense colonization of the French Islands and remained a major dilemma (Debien 2000: 171; Moreau de Saint-Mère 1958; Munford 1991).⁴⁹ This chapter, in general, will discuss the evolution of slave diet and eating patterns of the enslaved community and the various changes that occurred throughout the French colonial era through an engendered perspective. I will relate the origins of how the French defined what a suitable slave diet should be and the conception of a systematic alimentation—the act of giving nourishment—with some evidence that suggests these patterns may have begun during the Middle Passage. I will also discuss the similarity of slave foodways with that of the *engagés*, both groups who were disenfranchised in relation to the planter class in order to provide a more complete culinary study of the French colonial islands and to point out some similarities of food habits across racialized social groups. Next, I will discuss the two systems for slave nourishment, and how French law dictated the food provisioning of enslaved individuals. In general, I will discuss the foodstuffs and culinary practices of France's main colonial island possessions, including Saint-Domingue, Guadeloupe, and Martinique to comprehend how a distinct cuisine may have been one means by which enslaved laborers forged a black Creole identity within the French Antilles.

⁴⁹ In actuality, the state of nourishment for enslaved Africans was problematic throughout all French colonies of the New World including Louisiana (Davis 1917: 165, 171).

Whenever possible, I will specify historical events and the trajectory of slave foodways of Guadeloupe as they directly relate to my study of La Mahaudière.

Food, Africans, and the Middle Passage

To begin, the roots of the foodways of enslaved Africans may have emerged before they reached any New World destination. During the Middle Passage, the weeks at sea immobilized by chains and living in the hull or under the deck of slave ships, enslaved Africans were forced to consume foodstuffs that may not have been typical for their cultural groups. Generally, rice or yams was the staple of their meals, supplemented by a sauce made of seafood, beef, or pork (Kiple 1984: 60). Dr. Benjamin-Sigismond Frossard, a witness who made many voyages to and from the New World during the slave trade, commented that the enslaved were given two meals a day with a pint of water with each serving. The meal consisted of “broad beans with mashed yams, some rice or pork” (Frossard vol. 1 1789: 263). Dr. Frossard adds that pork may have been intended for the enslaved, but it was the sailors that more often received it. He continued in his description of the Middle Passage slave food by saying that the meal of mashed yams was served with broad beans and topped with a “sauce made up of palm tree oil and flour”. Sometimes, the meal was seasoned with melegueta peppers (“grains of paradise”) to make it more tolerable for consumption (Carney and Rosomoff 2009: 69).

When embarked off the coast of Guinea, rice rather than yams was the staple food and it was cheaply purchased. A maritime witness, reporting sometime in the early 18th century, detailed how yams were the “favorite food of the negroes who are accustomed to them [in Africa] since childhood”, although rice was preferred by those from the Sene-Gambian region and the Gold Coast.⁵⁰

While the majority of the foods served to the enslaved Africans may have closely resembled their usual diet, new foods were introduced to them during the Middle Passage. Along with European broad beans, French oatmeal and other peas and beans were also sent to feed the enslaved Africans aboard ship (Mandelblatt 2008: 414). Other foodstuffs included pearl millet, Asiatic rice, maize, and manioc used for carbohydrates, peppers, sorghum, peanuts, coconuts, bananas, plantains, and tamarinds (Barbot 1992: 781; Carney 2001: 381-382; Hall 2007: 22-23; Klein 1999: 62; Lewicki 1974:20; Mandelblatt 2008: 20). Further, European slavers used similar provisioning strategies regardless of the origin of the enslaved passengers (Klein 1999:93; Thomas 1997: 430).

Despite one witness’s observance of some meats being added to meals, it seems that the meals during transatlantic trips lacked a sufficient amount of protein. According to some scholars that study colonial disease and nutrition via skeletal remains, enslaved Africans were not given a balanced diet. Instead, there was an

⁵⁰ Rice was a food provision on Portuguese ships as early as the 1690s but became a staple for feeding enslaved Africans by the mid-18th century (Judith Carney 2001: 384-385).

overabundance of starches for the enslaved Africans who were served a “meager fare that would have been severely deficient in almost all nutrients [...] and their bodies would actually have been starving, although their stomachs were full” by the time they arrived at Caribbean ports (Kiple 1984: 60). In short, the enslaved Africans were already suffering from malnutrition while still aboard the slave ships.

I argue that it was during the Middle Passage when a creolized foodways, if nutrient deficient, may have been created. These various foodstuffs that included palm oil, yams, rice originating from West Africa, French oats, peas and broad beans, and also foods from the New World in the form of peanuts, manioc and maize created a hybridized diet. This combination of foods from various cultures resonates with what was typical of slave foodways on plantations in the Caribbean; enslaved Africans were likely already attuned to consuming foreign foodstuffs if they endured the Middle Passage.

Yet even though the European slave traders gave the ship captives some foods that were either familiar or similar to ones of their native diet, enslaved Africans continued to exercise agency even in the highly controlled and horrific spaces of the slave ships. Although bound in chains, kept in cramped and inhumane conditions, enslaved Africans exercised their power of choice to accept or not accept what food was given. For some Africans, refusing to eat, though not as overt an act as jumping overboard and drowning, represented their active resistance to their new enslaved

status. Others may have chosen to refuse foods that were foreign to their palate. For example, Dr. Frossard detailed that most of the Africans had “such an aversion for broad beans that when they were given them they furtively threw them into the sea” (Frossard vol. 1 1789: 263). This would not be the only time enslaved Africans asserted their agency over food choices (see also Chapter 5).

In what follows, I discuss the food practices of the enslaved Africans and *engagés* during the first decades of French colonization of the French Antilles. I have been positing that Creole foodways were tied to enslaved Guadeloupean identity formation, and here I attempt to demonstrate what was distinctive enough about their foodways that made its relationship to identity a plausible one. There were several foodstuffs, mostly complex carbohydrate tubers and plant-based proteins, consumed by both poor whites and enslaved Africans, yet there were also differences between their food habits. In the last decades of the 17th century, the sugar boom caused a radical economic change in the agricultural industry which resulted in a large-scale shift in racial demographics as the importation of enslaved Africans increased. With this shift, France and its colonial administrators sought to enact laws that, at least on paper, ensured adequate provisions for the ever-growing enslaved workforce. Ultimately, due to the ambivalence of the planter class, the task of providing for the enslaved Africans would fall upon the laborers themselves.

Slave Food during 17th and 18th Centuries

Reconstructing slave foodways during the first five decades of colonization in the French West Indies is a difficult task. With the exception of several well-known travel accounts, there appears to be a scarcity of documents on slave food provisions and their distributions until the second half of the 18th century (Debien 2000:215).⁵¹ Despite the paucity of historical evidence, some scholars have been able to locate enough primary sources that discuss slave nourishment to make some generalities about slave foodways and how it developed over the centuries (Debien 2000; Munford 1991).

During the first decades of French colonization, most of the island colonies were sparsely occupied by the French planters, *engagés*, and enslaved Africans. Food provisions directly from Europe were few. Naval warfare and disputes with pirate ships made importation of French food supplies unpredictable and unreliable (Munford vol. 3 1991: 615). Thus, the new inhabitants adapted to new foodways by subsisting on local foods that became ubiquitous throughout the Caribbean beginning with their initial importation by Columbus. As it was understood in Europe, the basis of nourishment for peasants (who were involved in intense agricultural labor) was significant amounts of carbohydrates that provided high

⁵¹ These include Père Jean-Baptiste Du Tertre's travels throughout the French West Indies during the early-to-mid-17th century; Dominican father Jean-Baptiste Labat in Guadeloupe in 1696; and French historian and lawyer Mederic Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry's travels to Saint Domingue and Martinique during the second half of the 18th century.

caloric energy. Drawing upon this existing knowledge, the French colonists used it to devise the provisioning of both their white and enslaved plantation labor force. The most popular choices for carbohydrates were found in the form of three tubers. The manioc, yam, and to a lesser extent, the sweet potato became a significant part of the colonial diet by the end of the 17th century (Donnadieu 2009: 136; Du Tertre 1979: 130-132, 136-138; Keegan 2000: 1272; Kiple 1984:66; Labat vol. 1 1931: 276; Labat 1970: 167).

Dominican priest Père Raymond Breton, one of the first colonists of the French West Indies, landed on Guadeloupe in 1635 and encountered the Amerindians cultivating tubers such as manioc (*Manihot utilissima*), cocoyam (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium* Schott), peanuts (*Arachis hypogaea* L.) and sweet potatoes (*Ipomoea batatas*) (Hatzenberger 2003: 62). In their gardens, Amerindians also grew a wide variety of beans (*Phaseolus* spp.), herbs, peanuts (*Arachis hypogaea*), peppers (*Capiscum* sp.), spices, cacao (*Theobroma cacao*), melons, gourds, and fruits (Hatzenberger 2003: 61-62; Keegan 2000: 1262). Soon, colonists pressed the Amerindians to mass produce these local foodstuffs, along with 16th-century imports such as plantains and bananas (*Musa* spp.), and several crops indigenous to South and Central America such as pineapples (*Ananas comosus*), papaya (*Carica papaya*), and possibly a New World indigenous variety of yams (*Dioscorea trifida*) (Du Tertre 1979: 120; Fallope 1992:37; Hatzenberger 2003; Keegan 2000:1262; Lasserre 1961: 329; Mandelblatt 2008: 20; O'Brien 2000: 212). The colonists became dependent on

the Amerindians to teach them how to select and process the native foods (Keegan 2000:1272). Of all of them, manioc, also known as cassava, was one of the most important Amerindian contributions to colonial culture, including to the foodways of white and enslaved laborers.

Manioc

Manioc (*Manihot esculenta*), an indigenous (native to South America), perennial, woody shrub with an edible tuber is called "cassava" on Francophone-speaking islands. In Anglophone areas the food procured from the tuber is often called "tapioca", while it is known as "yuca" in Latin America. The manioc root is bitter and poisonous if eaten raw. There are a variety of manioc species differing in taste and color as well as different growing and consumption conditions (Du Tertre 1979: 131; Onwueme 1978: 234). The bitter element is a glycoside of hydrocyanic acid (HCN), which occurs in the white, yellow, or red flesh varieties. Native Americans learned that the toxic element could be removed by boiling or squeezing the tuber. Despite this danger, manioc was the staple of the Amerindian diet. Manioc can tolerate a wide range of imperfect growing conditions. It has the ability to grow on marginal lands where cereals and other crops do not grow well and it allowed planters to restrict the planting of high nutrient soils to growing their cash crops. Another reason for its popularity as a subsistence food crop was its drought tolerance,

which meant that it could serve as a reserve food when other crops failed. Manioc matures in 10-12 months with some varieties lasting up to 24 months without harvesting. Harvesting may be delayed by as much as a year if desired until the time for processing, selling, etc. (Cock 1985). As processed flour, manioc can be stored for months without spoiling (Stewart 1994:74).

Importantly, manioc has the greatest yield of starch per acre of any crop in the world and, therefore, it was a cheap and significant source of carbohydrates. Moreover, manioc is easy to cultivate in terms of different planting and harvest times. Although the root crop has labor-intensive processing methods, it is a hardy and stable annual crop that could be cultivated with little water. Manioc does not require much soil preparation or weeding when compared with other crops (Du Tertre vol. 2 1979:134). Not surprisingly, by the early 17th century manioc was the most widespread tuber of the islands (Debien 2000:186).

Early French colonists mimicked the Portuguese colonists of Brazil by quickly adopting the cultivation and consumption of manioc. The tuber is easily converted into flour (often called *cassava* in this form) for longer preservation and is prepared in multiple ways for consumption. Whenever possible, the French colonists would bake the flour into thin, hard breads as was taught to them by the natives. The manioc flour was liquified and poured over hot terracotta griddles to make thin crepe-

like servings. Once cooked on both sides, the thin breads were left to dry in the sun (Du Tertre vol. 2 1979: 132-134).

Yams and Sweet Potatoes

Other vegetables that quickly became staples of for new Caribbean settlers included yams (*Dioscoreaceae* sp.) and sweet potatoes (*Ipomoea batatas*) (Du Tertre vol. 1 1979: 120; Labat 1931: 1275, 1970: 167; Satineau 1928: 264).⁵² While some types of yams such as *Dioscorea trifida* originated to the Americas and some have Asiatic origins, other *Dioscorea* varieties were native to Africa and were transplanted to the New World, possibly as early as when the first enslaved Africans arrived (Benoît 2000: 57; Elzebroek and Wind 2008: 378).⁵³ Yam is the preferred staple food crop in some regions of West Africa today and most likely was so before European contact. The word *yam* is an adaptation of the Wolof word "nyami" (Degras 1993; Mintz 1996: 39).⁵⁴ Thus, many enslaved Africans coming to the Caribbean by the mid-to-late 17th century were already accustomed to cultivating and consuming yams. Notwithstanding the African heritage of yam cultivation, there were other

⁵² It must be said that a number of edible plants, spices, fruits, and vegetables (such as citrus fruits, plantains, bananas, African yams, eggplants, pomegranates, coconuts, ginger, cinnamon) imported during Iberian travels during the first decades of the 16th century became ubiquitous throughout the Caribbean and absorbed into Native American culinary practices before slavery took (in the latter half of the 17th century) and they were incorporated into slave foodways in the French Caribbean (Kiple and Ornelas 2000: 1800; Pilcher 2000: 1279).

⁵³ *Dioscoreaceae cayenensis* is one example of an African yam.

⁵⁴ A new etymological argument suggests that the word yam is most likely a derivative of the Portuguese *inhame* or the Spanish *ñame* rather than having a West African origin (Hall 2007: 20).

incentives for growing the tuber. Like manioc, labor demand is low and it could be planted in various soils and also stored for months (Debien 2000: 186).

In general, it seems that for Europeans living in the Caribbean during the 17th century, the sweet potato was the most flavorful tuber and preferred over manioc or yams (Du Tertre 1979: 136). For example, English colonists subsisted on sweet potatoes more so than their French counterparts (Du Tertre 1979: 136; Labat vol.1 1931: 277). While French and English colonists appeared to have preferred the sweet potato, the enslaved population may have had more ambivalent thoughts regarding the tuber. For some ethnic groups not yet accustomed to New World foodstuffs, the ingestion of the tuber led to intestinal-related illnesses (Kiple 1984: 66). Health issues aside, Europeans attempted to force the adaptation of the tuber upon enslaved Africans, which was the case of Saint Domingue and some English islands (Labat vol. 1 1931: 276, 1970: 167).⁵⁵

Like manioc, sweet potatoes are native to the Americas and come in a range of colors and tastes. At the onset of colonization, there were eight to ten different varieties of sweet potato in three principal colors: white, red, and yellow (Du Tertre 1979: 136; Labat vol. 1 1931: 274). The French word *patate* comes from the Spanish and Portuguese term, *batata*, for the tuber (Labat vol. 1 1931: 275). The sweet potato,

⁵⁵ “In San Domingo [sic] the masters give their slaves only sweet potatoes to eat. The drivers takes the slaves every day to the potato patch and each man digs up as many potatoes as he wants but has to provide himself with other eatables” (Labat 1970: 167).

too, can flourish in low-nutrient soils and all parts of the plant may be used for animal fodder (Bouwkamp 1985). It has less starch than yams, is moister, and usually sweet in taste. In general, sweet potatoes are shorter and smaller than the yam varieties. Sweet potatoes were attractive as a subsistence crop for a few reasons. The tuber had a shorter growing season than yams (Price 1896). After severe hurricane damage, manioc crops often perished while sweet potatoes appeared to be more resilient. In addition, the entire plant was used: the tubers for human consumption, the vines for pig and cow feed.

According to Père Jean-Baptiste Du Tertre, a Dominican priest living on the French islands in the early to mid 1600s, yams were viewed as food exclusively for the enslaved Africans (Du Tertre 1979: 138).⁵⁶ Yet, as more *engagés* traveled to the French islands, yams were consumed more widely. According to Dominican priest and botanist Père Jean-Baptiste Labat, who lived on the French islands in last years of the 17th century, sweet potatoes and yams became the staple starches for newly arrived *engagés* (Labat vol.1 1931: 276-277, 1970: 107; Satineau 1928: 264). One possible reason why the *engagés* favored yams and sweet potatoes over manioc was their shorter preparation time. To process manioc it required expertise and time (several days) to remove the cyanide thoroughly, and then various steps to prepare the

⁵⁶ This racialized concept of the yam was shared by English colonists in Jamaica, St. Vincent, and Trinidad, as well (Benoît 2007: 29; Carmichael 1834: 162).

tuber into flour for consumption. One needed only to peel and cut sweet potatoes and yams.

Although the *engagés* had to grow accustomed to foreign root vegetables previously unknown in France, the lack of meat protein in their diet was familiar to them. Traditionally, most peasants and working-class people subsisted mainly on grains or cereals, and vegetables (including tubers), with meat-laden meals saved for religious holidays and other feast days (Cortonesi 2000: 269; Goubert 1986: 82-87; Le Roy Ladurie 1987: 75-76). The French lower classes prepared sweet potatoes and yams as they did European root vegetables (Goubert 1986: 86): the tubers were cut, placed in a pot and cooked in salted water for one of their main meals of the day. Sweet potatoes were often peeled and cut into quarters, and cooked with meat (when available) to make a thick and tasty soup like that of traditional French cuisine that uses turnips, carrots and other European roots (Mennell 1985: 62). During the 17th century to the early 18th century in the French islands, sweet potatoes were viewed as a substitute for bread (Labat vol.1 1931: 277). Preparation methods called for the tubers to cook in their skins in a pot of water. After the liquid began to foam (if meat was added beforehand), the unpeeled tubers were washed and added to the pot. During the simmering, crushed pepper, lemon juice and a bit more salt was added. When ready, the yams or sweet potatoes were taken out of the pot, the skins removed, and then the flesh was pressed out a bit and eaten by soaking them in a chili pepper

sauce called *pimentade* (Labat vol. 1 1931: 276-277).⁵⁷ This dish was often prepared for breakfast (Du Tertre vol. 2: 137; Labat vol. 1 1931: 277). Most likely, *engagé* meals were often served as potage dishes, similar to their continental counterparts, although some of the ingredients had been substituted by including yams and sweet potatoes and adopting *pimentade* for added flavor. This recipe demonstrates how *engagés* embraced creolized foodways as did the enslaved Africans.

In general, the *engagés* and the slave community, albeit racially and socially dissimilar, had virtually the same basic staple foodstuffs: manioc flour to be cooked into biscuits, yams, and sweet potatoes. More resourceful individuals kept a garden next to their homes to grow herbs and fruits and vegetables. If naval imports could safely arrive and if the planter allowed it, the *engagés* and the enslaved laborers would occasionally receive servings of salted fish or beef. Of course, with easy access to the food from the sea and rivers, their diet, as with the enslaved (see Chapter 5), may have included various marine species which were plentiful and typical of coastal French regions of Normandy, and Brittany, the original homelands of many *engagés* (Butel 2002: 38; Satineau 1928: 67-68). Furthermore, both groups often used similar cooking practices. Even black and white children ate porridge sometimes flavored by pork fat and *pimentade* (Debien 2000: 172).

⁵⁷ This sauce, adapted from the Amerindian version by adding oil and salt, was named *pimentade* by French buccaneers (Labat vol. I 1931: 277) and quickly became a colonial cuisine staple for blacks and whites (Du Tertre 1979: 137; Labat vol. 1 1931: 176).

Like their French counterparts, slave meals also incorporated a variety of ingredients into one pot for a stew. By the 18th century, some of these one-pot stews were called ragouts. Some French witnesses viewed ragouts to be more unique to the region and dissimilar to European recipes. Referred to as “creole ragouts”, these dishes were described as being a “strange hotchpotch” of meat or salted fish that was heavily seasoned with hot peppers (Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 2 1958: 162, 843).

The enslaved community would draw their portions from a common pot into individual serving vessels. During the late 17th and early 18th centuries, serving vessels probably consisted of a calabash gourd cut in half, if not European ceramics.⁵⁸ Over time, the enslaved community began to acquire cheap French earthenware bowl-plates used ubiquitously throughout France. Often flatware such as forks and knives were not necessary. Food was consumed by hand as witnessed by Mederic Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry who observed that the enslaved laborers took much pleasure in their way of eating (Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 1 1958: 61). What was clearly problematic for the enslaved Africans was the constant insufficient amount of food for them (Debien 2000: 175; Du Tertre vol. 2 1979: 515; Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 2 1958: 1120; Satineau 1928: 266-267).

Unlike the French workers, the enslaved laborers were only allowed two meals: one towards ten or eleven o’clock in the morning, and the other around five

⁵⁸ Sometimes a coconut or gourd/calabash container was referred to as a *couis* during the 17th century in the French Caribbean (Debien 2000: 232; Saint-Méry vol. 1 1958: 61; Thibault 2008: 209).

o'clock in the evening. During the first meal, many would congregate to eat together. On some plantations, there was often an old enslaved woman or even an *engagé* who tended to a marmite (pot) for lunch while others worked in the field (Benoît 2000:106; Du Tertre 1979: 514). At mealtime, one or more foodstuffs would be served, and much to Moreau de Saint-Méry's interest, eaten together in a bowl (Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 1 1958: 61). When the time for dinner arrived, the enslaved laborers were called to receive their portion of food to be taken to their homes and consumed as they wished. If they were working in fields far from their homes, then the meals were taken to them and the workers ate on site (Debien 2000: 173-174).

Mealtime for the enslaved was extremely important for it was a time for community building and bonding. It was the occasion for storytelling and engaging in mimicry and jokes that brought about raucous laughter. Any performance was allowed that provided amusement for the audience. Once eating ended, water was consumed. To drink alcohol (*tafia*) during a meal was a rare occurrence. For that reason, Moreau de Saint-Méry stated that there were fewer problems with alcoholism among the enslaved communities than with the planter class (Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 1 1958: 62).

Slave meals always had an individualistic element, with each family preparing it in the fashion of their particular tastes, not unlike their French counterparts.

However, there were two distinctions between what poor whites and blacks consumed. The first is that enslaved blacks adhered to the CFL dietary pattern. A structural concept first proposed by Sidney Mintz in 1992, this pattern is characterized by three categories: the core (complex-carbohydrate staples often light in color, bland in flavor, and mushy to the touch), fringe (ingredients that provide flavor) and protein-rich legumes (Mintz 2001). According to Mintz, this is a common pattern of agrarian cultures throughout the world and most certainly in the Caribbean. In essence, enslaved women were responsible for preparing and cooking family dishes. While starchy tubers and some plant-based protein foodstuffs were available and essential to each meal, it was through the women's sense of ingenuity through the use of fringe foods that provided satisfying meals for their families. Although the *engagé* and enslaved Africans had similar carbohydrates and protein foodstuffs available to them, how each group flavored their meals was another marker of distinction in their foodways. In general, the enslaved Africans prepared their food with far more heat and spice than the French (Debien 2000: 172; Hearn 1923; Wimpffen 1994: 116).

Peppers

Colonists learned early on to flavor their meats and bland starchy meals with chili peppers. During the early 17th and 18th centuries, the French indiscriminately called the large family of peppers (*Capiscum* spp.) by one or two names like the

“Indian” or “Brazilian pepper”, although the many kinds of peppers vary in taste, shape, color, size, and heat intensity (Du Tertre 1979: 112). The French probably adopted the use of chili peppers (*Capiscum frutescens*) from the local Amerindians who called it *aji* (Turner 2004: 12). Although extracting salt from their environment was relatively easy, peppers were used as the principal spice of the Amerindians. The Amerindian sauce for flavoring all their meals consisted of the juice from boiled manioc, lemon juice and a significant quantity of peppers (Labat vol. 1 1931: 277). The French preferred to consume peppers in *pimentade* form that would accompany their meals. According to Père Du Tertre, few French colonists could consume chili peppers in the same amount as the natives. Instead, they found that it was better in “moderation” (Du Tertre 1979: 112). While most colonists did appreciate heat in moderation when compared to Amerindian tastes, the same was also said when comparing heat tolerance with Africans’ tastes. Enslaved Africans prepared their food with twice the amount of spice and heat than their white counterparts (Debien 2000: 172). This culinary style of adding heat to foods, for the enslaved laborers, stemmed from the West African tradition of seasoning foods with cayenne (*Capiscum annuum*) and/or melegueta peppers (*Aframomum melegueta*) after the Columbian exchange occurred (Hall 2007: 34).

The Code Noir and Slave Subsistence

During the early decades of French expansion into the Caribbean, the small population of French colonists and black enslaved laborers appear to practice a similar system of foodways. While it's certain that foodways of the French West Indies went through various changes throughout the 17th century, its nuances may have not been observed by European travelers. Rather, we have a generalized understanding of food practices for blacks and whites. Both racial groups subsisted mainly on indigenous and originally 15th-century imported vegetables and tubers that became ingrained in the horticultural makeup of the Caribbean landscape. By the last two decades of the 17th century, while the sugar revolution had gripped the French colonies in the Caribbean, the islands underwent a radical, economic change from small farms to medium and large plantations as the sugar cane crop began to dominate the agriculture industry. The growing dependence upon an enslaved African labor force assisted in the formation of more racially constructed culinary practices under a well-defined institution of slavery and stratified social setting (Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 1 1958: 45-46). Thus, a crisis in food provision for the enslaved was the result of intense French cultivation of sugar cane by 1670 (Dubois 2005: 32; Mandelbatt 2008: 20; Tomich 2000b: 745). Planters chose to concentrate on planting sugar cane for export and neglecting suitable space on their lands for foodstuffs to feed their enslaved laborers.

Food for the enslaved Africans was insufficient for several reasons. Threats of famine were constant throughout the *ancien regime*. Deliveries of foodstuffs such as salted fish or meat, and grain by cargo ships were often irregular and unpredictable (Munford vol. 3 1991: 615). Environmental factors negatively affected the food production to supply the enslaved population. Many of the islands were subject to hurricanes and fires, which often created food shortages (Kiple 1984; Kiple and Higgs 1992; Sheridan 1985). Prolonged droughts or overly wet seasons also tampered with the ability to grow foodstuffs locally.

However, the worst reason was the basic neglect on the part of the slave owners. In general, there were many critics of the planters' general lack of concern over the well being of the enslaved community. Various scholars (Debien 2000; Jameson 1971; Munford 1991; Satineau 1928) have studied numerous letters of the general administrators of the islands to the Minister for the navy, the instructions of the colonists to their managers, and the reports of the managers to the colonial owners to assess why the enslaved population was always under the threat of hunger. An analysis of plantation accounts and inventories suggest that the inconsistent recording of food rations for the enslaved laborers may have not been of great importance to the slave owners. Even fresh water to drink (while always given to their beasts of burden) was not provided for the enslaved and so they had to actively seek it out (Du Tertre 1979: 514). French travelers, priests and visiting officials to the king reported that the French plantation owners skirted their responsibilities of feeding the enslaved

population properly (Du Tertre vol. 2 1979, Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 2 1958: 1120; Labat vol. 7 1742: 193).⁵⁹ In their chronicles, travelers went so far as to say that the slave owners exhibited such a destructive “stinginess” that it left the enslaved community constantly undernourished (Du Tertre 1979: 516; Labat vol. 7 1742: 193). Moreover, this unwillingness to feed the enslaved community was notorious throughout the French colonies, which included Saint-Domingue, Martinique, St. Christophe (now St. Kitts), Grenada, and St. Lucia.⁶⁰ In places such as Martinique, planters were often so neglectful of their responsibilities that local ordinances obliged planters for proper provisions for the enslaved laborers (Du Tertre vol. 2 1979: 514).

Local magistrates were aware of the situation and passed ordinances that required slave owners to provide the enslaved with at least two pounds of meat every week and an additional pound when supply ships arrived (Debien 2000:175-176). However, the local government did not actively enforce the ordinances leaving many witnesses perplexed by how the enslaved community would survive. This problem weighed so heavily on local governments that an ordinance from the General Governor of the Islands, passed July 13, 1648, ordered slave owners to cultivate food for the enslaved (Satineau 1928: 262). It appeared to have had little effect. Throughout his travels of the French island colonies during the mid-to-late 17th

⁵⁹ Lettres au Ministère des Colonies et de la Marine.

⁶⁰ Debien makes this claim via the accounts of Du Tertre and Labat’s travels during the mid 17th century to Saint-Domingue, Martinique, St. Kitts, Grenada, and St. Lucia (Debien 2000: 175-716).

century, Père Du Tertre observed inconsistent provisioning practices for enslaved laborers:

“As for the food of the negroes, this depends on their Masters, it is as different in each hut as is the mood from those which they serve. Some are better nourished than others however, in reality they are all nourished in a completely pitiful [sic] way, that if they did not have a level of shrewdness to cope with such treatment, they would suffer infinitely” (Du Tertre vol. 2 1979: 514).

The French government finally interceded to try and answer what planters claimed were confusing and difficult questions of how to provide nourishment for the slave population. A royal decree went out in 1685, the *Code Noir* (Black Code), but it was not fully executed until 1689. The *Code Noir* was the first codified set of laws that denoted the conditions of slavery and also detailed and restricted the activities of free blacks and the enslaved community for the French colonies of the Caribbean and later in Louisiana. In the case of slave alimentation, slave owners were legally required to provide proper nourishment for the enslaved community. Article 22 stated:

“Each week masters will have to furnish to their slaves ten years old and older for their nourishment two and a half [jars] in the measure of the land, of cassava flour or three cassavas weighing at least two-and-a-half pounds each or equivalent things, with two pounds of salted beef or three pounds of fish or other things in proportion, and to children after they are weaned to the age of ten years half of the above supplies.”

The *Code Noir* attested to the importance of protein in the slave diet by making slave owners responsible for providing salted meat or fish for the enslaved Africans. As Père Du Tertre noted, “the Master...gives a barrel of [salted] meat [to be] distributed every Sunday to the negros [sic] with a quantity of cassava and peas” (vol. 2 1979: 515). However, an overwhelming amount of their staple food was laden within carbohydrates, consumed as starchy vegetables (Debien 2000: 173; Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 1 1958: 843). Père Du Tertre, baffled by such a starch-heavy diet said, “It is true that I do not know how these poor people here make it with the little meat that one gives them; they manage better than much of the French. They replace the meat by yams, sweet potatoes, the large millet [corn], and quantity of herbs and broad beans with which they make a strange hodgepodge” (vol. 2 1979: 515).

Weekly rations of manioc flour or yams were given on the one day off allowed, Sunday, or on Monday mornings along with salted beef or cod when available. If a slave owner felt obliged enough, plantains or cassava and peas were also distributed. When salted beef or fish were scarce, sometimes peas, yams, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, corn, or a significant quantity of herbs served as a substitute for animal protein (Du Tertre 1979: 516). The overseer or an *engagé* in charge of the enslaved field laborers was responsible for food distribution. If the slave community of a plantation was relatively small, then a trusted enslaved, often an old black midwife, was assigned to handing out the weekly rations (Labat vol. 7 1742: 193). However, traveler journals and French administrators’ reports contain repeated complaints that

planters were so obsessed with sugar cane cultivation and sugar processing that the enslaved community often had too little to eat (e.g. Debien 2000: 175; Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 2 1958: 1120; Satineau 1928: 266).

While the *Code Noir* stated specifically what foodstuffs were to be provided, there were no fixed practices as to how the food would be distributed. The French legal specifics on slave provisions were never formally followed or even regulated by slave owners. Although conditions varied from island to island and from plantation to plantation (Munford vol. 3 1991: 615), slave owners throughout the centuries were consistently neglectful in the case of providing nourishment for the enslaved laborers. The reality of the matter is that slave alimentation was so poorly supplied throughout the entire time of colonial slavery that it brought much criticism by eyewitnesses, including French governmental aides (Debien 2000: 171). Due to the lack of concern for the enslaved laborers' health and nourishment, coupled with the French government's failure to enforce ordinances related to provisioning, the enslaved community took the responsibility to provide sustenance for themselves and for their families (Debien 2000: 171).

The problem of insufficient slave alimentation would continue throughout the French island colonies over the centuries and observers would continue to critique the situation. Travelers often characterized the slave owners as exhibiting such a destructive "stinginess" that left the enslaved community constantly undernourished

(Du Tertre 1979 vol. 2: 516; Labat vol. VII: 193). Local magistrates were aware of this unwillingness to feed the enslaved community. Official documents stating complaints about planters not feeding slaves date back to 1646 making the situation publicly known throughout all of the French colonies in the West Indies. (Debien 2000: 175). Two years later, the situation was becoming so dire that the authorities had to intervene. Ordinances were passed that required slave owners to provide the enslaved laborers with at least two pounds of meat every week and an additional pound a week when supply ships arrived (Debien 2000: 175-176). Another ordinance was passed by Patrocle de Thoisy, governor general of the islands in August 13, 1648, obligating the planters to cultivate food specifically for the enslaved workers (Du Tertre 1979 vol. 2: 480). Throughout the 18th century, more than a dozen decrees were created to oversee the support for slave nourishment (Benoît 2000: 109). These ordinances may have been genuine in theory but failed in reality. The local government did not actively force the slave owners to sufficiently feed the enslaved laborers. Pères Labat and Du Tertre maintained that the quality and the quantity of the food were never regulated leaving the management of food procurement to the discretions of the planters who ultimately made very little effort to change the food situation of their enslaved laborers (Du Tertre 1979 vol. 2: 480; Labat vol. 7: 193). While living in Saint-Domingue during the 18th century in the French island colonies, Moreau de Saint-Méry said “[the slave owners] always do not have the quantity of food necessary to [feed] the negroes. They seem not to know that

one always requires too much work of a man whom one does not nourish enough. It is [the responsibility of] the government to remind them and make them carry out the laws related to this subject” (vol. 2 1958: 1120).

The colonial administrators were to cite, and if necessary, arrest any planters found in violation of the *Code Noir*. Still, an enslaved African’s nourishment was never guaranteed. Even if planters were accused of not feeding the enslaved community, few were ever held accountable for such allegations. While colonists did not adhere to the *Code Noir*, the French government continued (e.g., reports of 1696, 1708, 1714, 1731, 1736) to denounce the colonial administrators for not enforcing it (Debien 2000: 181). While the problems of planter negligence continued, the island administrators continued to pass more ordinances for the next 130 years to little avail (Debien 2000: 184-186).⁶¹ Despite the drastic act of filing a commission of inquiry into the sugar industry, insufficient provisions would occur as late as the first decades of the 19th century (Benoît 2000: 126; Donnadieu 2009: 135; Schmidt 2000: 310, 440).⁶²

⁶¹ Ordinances passed as late as 1846, two years before slavery was abolished in all French colonies, indicate that colonial administrators were still unable or unwilling to force planters to feed the enslaved laborers (See Schoelcher 1847: 94).

⁶² Dale Tomich’s interrogation of Ministère du Commerce et des Manufactures, *Enquête sur les sucres* (Paris 1829), is detailed in his 2000 article “The Other Face of Slave Labour” that the majority of Martinique plantations rarely provided the dietary standards for the laborers which forced them to provide for their own subsistence.

Unwilling to spend much of their growing profits on food for the enslaved community, the planters looked for an alternative and eventually adopted the Portuguese practice, which began as early as 1545, of allowing the enslaved laborers to grow foodstuffs in gardens. It is believed that this practice originated on the Cape Verde Islands and continued when the Portuguese slave trade expanded in the New World (2000b: 745).⁶³ This answer to the slave alimentation problem arrived in French West Indies with Dutch refugees and their enslaved laborers, and reached Guadeloupe and Martinique sometime around 1640. As they did in Brazil, the Dutch did not provide food or clothing for the enslaved community in their new Caribbean landscape. Instead, enslaved laborers had the option to take half a free day a week and be given only half their rations or be given no rations and take a full free Saturday to cultivate their gardens. Sundays were customarily a day of rest for the enslaved laborers, which could be used for more subsistence-related activities (Tomich 2000b: 743-746). It seems that enslaved women were the main cultivators (Debien 2000: 179). They planted manioc, sweet potatoes, plantains, and peas to consume or sell to buy clothing and other necessities as they saw fit (Du Tertre vol. 2 1979: 485, 516; Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 2 1958: 162; Schoelcher 1976: 12-13).

This system of food production by the enslaved for the enslaved was not legally authorized by the king. The *Code Noir* insisted that primary food rations should be

⁶³ An exception to this idea, according to Catherine Benoît, is in the work of botanists and agronomists who posit an Amerindian origin rather than Portuguese for the use of gardens in the French West Indies (Benoît 2007: 32).

distributed by the planters and any cultivation of foodstuffs by the enslaved community should be merely a supplemental pursuit. However, the negligence on the part of the planters forced the enslaved community to become more self-sufficient and resourceful. It began slowly on small farms before becoming acceptable practice on larger plantations, which then spread to the English islands as well (Debien 2000: 178). The first farms to abandon weekly rations and adopt this strategy of providing time off for slaves to raise their own food were small cotton and indigo plantations. Later, small and medium-sized sugar plantations followed suit. With the growth of sugar plantations (in size and number) and the influx of enslaved Africans in greater numbers, more slave owners opted to not provide food (Debien 2000: 179).

Although the slave gardens were still rare in the 17th century on the French islands, harsh critiques came early from travelers as well as slave owners who witnessed this practice. According to government officials and government appointed missionaries, the free Saturday did not bring a satisfactory solution to the food problem. Many observed that many enslaved did not necessarily have the land or seeds to plant (Du Tertre vol. 2 1979: 516).

Slave Gardens and Provision Grounds

While the debate on slave alimentation continued into the 18th century, the enslaved community took every advantage of autonomous subsistence production via

gardens, a horticultural practice seen in many other parts of the Caribbean (Armstrong 1990: 243-244; Carmichael vol.1 1834: 162-167; Hall and Higman 1992; Higman 1998; Kiple 1984: 66; Marshall 1988; Mintz 1985; Tobin 2005: 65). These gardens, often called “negro gardens” (*jardin-nègres*) or “house gardens” (*jardin-case*) were small areas that butted up against the corner of slave houses (Debien 2000: 183). In these small plots, called “little Guineas”, the enslaved community, particularly the women, grew medicinal plants along with small tubers, pulses (peas, beans), small vegetables like okra (*Hibiscus esculentus*), squashes, herbs, capsicums, and occasionally corn, millet, rice, and fruit trees (Benoît 2000: 124).^{64, 65} These were the principal foodstuffs of the enslaved (Debien 2000: 208; Donnadieu 2009: 136; Tomich 2000b: 751). These plants and fruits were basic ingredients to slave cuisine that not only complemented starchy staples with protein and other dietary nutritional requirements, but also allowed for culinary creativity and provided a diversity of flavors and taste to slave meals. Therefore, while yams, cassava or sweet potatoes supplied the major source of dietary carbohydrate, the starchy monotony of the dish could be diversified by what a person chose to grow in their little garden to potentially complement their meal.

⁶⁴ As there was a clear division of labor in West Africa and in the English island colonies (Yentsch 1994: 204), it is most likely that women most often managed this activity in the French West Indies as well.

⁶⁵ Occasionally, the enslaved Africans grew non-edible plants such as tobacco for personal use or for market and the West Indian Locust tree for medicinal purposes. But the overwhelming majority of the garden products were for consumption.

In addition to the gardens adjacent to the slave homes, the enslaved community was so determined to garden that they would often take advantage of any land that was not directly used for the plantation's cash crops. It would include marginal areas such as firewall rows of cane fields for food plantings. Often, this was permitted without retribution because slave owners could maximize fertile land for the sugar or coffee crops and still provide land for slave-managed crops. Moreover, overseers supervised the planting of slave food in the fire alleys (Debien 2000: 196-7). On some coffee and indigo plantations, slave-managed crops were placed between the young seedlings of the host crop. This was based on the contingency that the enslaved community would not allow their crops (specifically manioc and sweet potatoes) to become intertwined with the host plant or exhaust the soils' nutrients or take time away from the slave labor of cultivation and harvest. In general, only corn, millet, rice, and peas were permitted.

Père Labat, who spent over ten years in the West Indies, was quite familiar with horticultural endeavors. He noted that, "the slaves cultivated on the edges of the woods and in some ground" which were only the worst corners of the plantation that could not produce sugar, or coffee (Labat vol. 1 1931: 389). Much to the confusion of colonial witnesses, the enslaved did not adopt European geometric patterns of planting their own crops. To the white colonists, Africans' placement of various crops was done in a haphazard manner (Debien 2000: 208). In actuality, the enslaved Africans used several techniques that included the planting of one crop among a mix

of several other crop species while utilizing a canopy stratification of tall and shorter trees to maximize sunlight, water and soil nutrients (Benoît 2007: 37). It is believed by some authors that some African agricultural techniques developed from different cultural and ethnic traditions which secured a successful yield of foods (Baumann 1928: 291-292; Debien 2000: 208; Lancaster 1976: 542-543; Mintz 1974: 236; Pulsipher 1994: 210, Sauer 1964: 51; Tobin 1999: 172; White et. al. 1981: 825). Furthermore, many of the gardening tasks, just as in West Africa, were gender specific: men prepared the ground and the women did the planting, weeding, and harvesting of crops (Baumann 1928: 291-292; Lancaster 1976: 542-543; White et al. 1981: 825). Through the decades that followed, the practice of slave-organized subsistence grew more popular.

In the early years of the 18th century, some plantations began to regulate the placement of slave houses to create a more uniform slave village layout, and to maximize control over the enslaved laborers and their labor output. A uniform slave village plan grew in popularity over the several decades. Plantation management strategies, aimed at control of the enslaved community and towards running plantations more efficiently, continued to evolve. After 1770, these strategies included the removal of individual, large slave gardens in order to make slave villages more uniform.

With this change in spatial use and form, individual slave gardens shifted away from the slave house and moved towards the edges of the plantation property. These grounds were then divided between greens and other vegetables, including tubers (Debien 2000: 207-08). With the availability of food always in flux, a minimum of two crops with high yields and quick maturity rates had to be planted. These crops had to be hardy, and able to withstand periods of drought in the low-nutrient soils of the plantation. As it was with individual gardens, yams and cassava were often the main tubers raised because they could be planted within dry soil with low labor demand. The free Saturday was still reserved for the maintenance of their horticultural plots. However, gardening was no longer for individual gardens and instead, the enslaved laborers had to work together at the designated space for the provision grounds. While location and garden size may have changed, it appears that gender dynamics associated with them did not. Observations were made throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries that women tended to manage the gardens and provision grounds (Benoît 2000:101; Debien 2000: 179; Gisler 1981: 46). The hours at the common grounds were directed and supervised by the overseers like all other tasks throughout the week (Debien 2000: 182). By this point in time, enslaved communities had grown accustomed to raising their own provisions and likely asserted the practice as a right that was steadfastly held on to. Thus, while the newly forced regimentation of housing space forced the creation of communal grounds and disallowed large planting areas near the slave houses, enslaved Africans always made

a point of having personal gardens and continued to carve out space for small gardens. According to the *Code Noir*, the provision-ground cultivations were to only be used as supplemental to weekly rations. However, as the decades passed the enslaved community as well as the planters grew dependent on the slave-organized subsistence practices and by the 19th century, they became central to the colonial economy.

Other Causes for Insufficient Slave Alimentation

Despite governmental ordinances, royal decrees, and the enslaved community's use of multiple subsistence strategies, food production and distribution was volatile. The second half of the 18th century brought about new commercial trade policies to reinforce French authority at the end of British occupation of the Windward Islands during the Seven Years War.⁶⁶ At this time, the colonists endured inconsistent French imports for several years and more importantly, suffered importation bans on some of the long-standing dietary necessities (Goebel 1963: 336). Due to the trade policy ordinances established by the king in 1763, planters' desires for foreign foodstuffs and commodities (lumber, bricks, fruits, livestock, etc.) were heavily restricted to imports that merchants of the metropole could not supply. The admittance of certain imports was compensation for the loss of Canada and Louisiana during the Seven Years War. However, plantation staples such as rice,

⁶⁶ In the British colonies of North America, it is known as the French and Indian War.

flour, salted beef and fish were not included in the necessary import items (Goebel 1963:336). Due to controversy over the execution of terms when the British would evacuate from French islands, local authorities of the Windward colonies took it upon themselves whether to uphold the new French trade policies or not. Therefore, some islands like St. Lucia and Martinique allowed New England trade vessels carrying flour and salted fish to all of its ports while others, including Guadeloupe, did not (Goebel 1963:337). No foreign vessel could enter the ports of Basse Terre or Grande Terre without written, administrative permission (Goebel 1963:342). Due to the restriction of foreign trade and the inability of Guadeloupe to export trade items from re-opened ports coupled with rising colonial protest, amendments to these policies came within two years after the original royal *mémoire* of April 1763. This allowed prohibited import products to enter Basse Terre city and Point-à-Pitre (Goebel 1963: 353). However, the French ministry made another change in trade policy in July 1767 banning the Irish importation of salt fish. Not surprisingly, colonists barraged the French government with complaints specifically requesting modifications of *l'arrêt* of 1767, which were not adjusted until June 1769 (Goebel 1963:363-364).

The frequent food shortages and the lack of salted fish importation greatly affected the enslaved community (Goebel 1963: 362 footnote 90). Furthermore, the slave owners' response to slave alimentation was ambivalent. Not all planters allowed the enslaved plots of land to cultivate and yet still did not adequately provide food for them to survive. Additionally, while some members of the enslaved community were

allowed gardens and given a free Saturday to tend to their plots, this single day was not often enough to ensure healthy crops. As noted by Père Labat, the grounds they were given were the most nutrient-poor soils. This was but one factor that led to slave subsistence problems (Debien 2000: 180). Père Labat, keenly aware that the enslaved communities were already over-stressed with their plantation duties, wondered if it was even practical to have them shoulder the entire responsibility to ensure their sustenance. He asked, “But if these slaves are diseased this day or that the weather is [such that it] prevents them from working or if, being lazy and licentious, they spend Saturdays without work; of what is to happen for the following week?” (vol. 4 1931: 201)

These questions were radically different than the concerns of the slave owners. Some of the colonists’ complaints were of a philosophical and commercial nature. The decision to allow gardens and communal grounds also led to debates of ownership and property rights. Although allowing the enslaved to grow much of their own food relieved much of the planter’s responsibility to feed them, it also created a certain amount of slave independence. The management of gardens produced a sense of slave autonomy, which generated tensions between the colonists and the enslaved community. Slave owners often worried over the enslaved laborers’ comprehension of land use versus property. Planters feared that the enslaved would come to care too deeply for a plot of land and believe they owned it. This would lead to a debate over the rights of ownership, eventually resulting in the question: how can one, who is by

law considered property, own property? Even more so, however, planters were concerned with a slave labor force that might not put the bulk of their efforts into sugar or coffee production. They grew very uncomfortable with an enslaved community that had any significant amount of free time, even if it was to work on their grounds. The enslaved community was also accused of neglecting their gardens if they were not coerced into working tending to them. However, this accusation appears to have been rarely witnessed or documented (Tomich 2000b: 751).

In general, the free day for tending to crops (and selling their surplus at markets) spawned a growing discomfort with slave autonomy. This led the French government to try and reinforce slaveowners' responsibility to feed their slaves. Even the *Code Noir* prohibited slave market commerce:

“We forbid them also to hold Negro [sic] markets or any other market on said days at the risk of similar punishments and of confiscation of the merchandise that shall be discovered at the market, and an arbitrary fine against the sellers.” Article 7.

“We also forbid slaves from selling any type of commodities, even fruit, vegetables, firewood, herbs for cooking and animals either at the market, or at individual houses, without a letter or a known mark from their masters granting express permission.” Article 19.

Article 24 clarifies the government's reason for the earlier articles by stating specifically to slave owners that:

“We similarly forbid them to unburden themselves of the food and subsistence of their slaves by permitting them to work a certain day of the week for own ends.”

Throughout the 18th century, the French government tried various measures to prohibit free Saturdays and to encourage plantation rationing with little effect. However, by 1786 a royal ordinance finally recognized how colonists illegally allowed the custom of Negro Saturdays, and attempted more severe tactics to better regulate the slave owners' obligation to feed the enslaved community (Fallope 1992: 106). In a few rare circumstances, slave owners were punished for granting free Saturdays instead of nourishing the enslaved laborers (Ministère secrétaire d'état de la marine 1844: 177; Debien 2000: 181). Yet, despite laws and ordinances passed by the French government, the administrators failed again to force the planters to act more responsibly in feeding the enslaved community.⁶⁷

While the *Code Noir* lawfully required slave owners to provide for their enslaved population, the colonists consistently failed to adequately supply and distribute salted meat and starchy tubers or manioc flour. Various hypotheses have been provided to explain why the consideration of basic maintenance, i.e., feeding the slave community, was not of great concern to the planters. One popular idea was that the

⁶⁷ These ordinances were not meant to make the enslaved community solely responsible for their food. Rather, it was to relieve the planters' stress of providing nourishment for the enslaved community in times of crisis that affected the islands, such as famine due to drought or after hurricane devastation (Tomich 2000b: 745).

colonists' drive for more crop profits far outweighed their interest in sustaining the well being of their enslaved population. During the early years of the slave trade, French planters relied on several sources for enslaved Africans, who were considered bountiful and extremely cheap (Beckles 1989b: 117; Eltis 2000: 114-116; Galenson 1986: 64-69; Manning 1990: 178; Stein 1978: 515). For many slave owners, it made more sense to work a person to death and purchase more Africans rather than look to their survival, health and well being (D'Auberteuil vol. 1 1778: 222; Dupuy 1985: 94-95; Fox-Genovese and Genovese 1983: 37; Mintz 1974: 63). In the case of Saint-Domingue, these French absentee planters had one or two overseers to manage all the plantation operations, including the livelihood of the enslaved community (King 2001: xvi; Moitt 2001: 59; Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 2 1958: 1220; Weaver 2006: 19). It is arguable whether absentee planters were unable to see the daily sufferings of undernourished workers, and thus had a strong sense of detachment on the issue. Another problem with slave alimentation, according to some colonists, was that the general management of slave gardens was too taxing. If there was not the threat of thieves or runaway slaves pillaging the crops, natural catastrophes in the form of prolonged droughts or heavy rains always made starvation an imminent threat (Debien 2000: 180). The slave gardens were needed.

Despite efforts from the French government, not only did the enslaved Africans continue to take their surplus garden products to be sold at markets on Saturday, but

also at additional smaller markets held on other days (Tomich 2000b: 753).⁶⁸ Free blacks and enslaved Africans ran highly successful markets (*marché des nègres*) in the colonies. As they did in West Africa, enslaved women held dominant positions in the local economy as market sellers throughout the Caribbean and some areas of the slave states of the American South (Aslakson 2008: 145; Bush 1990: 49; Debien 2000: 180; Gaspar and Hine 1996- 97-110; Hall 1972: 181; Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 1: 207; McDonald 1991: 194; Mintz 1960; Morgan 1998: 250). In some parts of the French Caribbean, such as Saint-Domingue, markets were so numerous that many could afford to specialize in particular items such as grains, herbs, seafood, vegetables or meats (Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 1 1958: 434). Consequently, it gave many enslaved women a very small, but important, level of commercial and monetary success. An independent market system controlled by enslaved Africans certainly sat uneasily in the minds of the colonists.

Diversity of Slave Diet

Despite the success of slave markets to sell varieties of foodstuffs, the basic slave diet even into the last decades of slavery in the 19th century was still comprised of complex carbohydrates (Benoît 2000: 110 footnote 61; Hatzenberger 2003: 222). Moreover, the continuously poor quality of slave food was such that there were

⁶⁸ By the second half of the 18th century, markets were held occasionally on Sundays as well (Saint-Méry vol. 1 1958: 433).

efforts made by some colonists throughout the centuries to increase slave rations of food and to supply good staple food sources. Although I have emphasized that the main staples of the French Caribbean slave diet were starches (manioc, sweet potatoes, plantains/bananas, and yams), there was much diversity, across space and time, to their foods. The introduction of these crops, after the arrival of significant numbers of Africans, onto the colonial landscape of the Caribbean would have a profound and lasting effect on Caribbean cuisines.

Quite often, environmental factors influenced the planters' food choices for the enslaved community. The choice of what to grow and distribute for slave alimentation depended upon which foods could mature quickly and conserve the longest under the best conditions (Debien 2000: 186). Cereals and tubers that could grow in low-nutrient soils and tolerate volatile rain patterns were sought for provision grounds.

Whether the enslaved community would agree with the assessment of their diet as “boring” by European witnesses such as Moreau de Saint-Méry is not known.⁶⁹ What was important to the slave owners was that the core of the slave diet be made of starch-based ingredients to act as energy-potent stodge for the enslaved laborers who daily tackled very arduous manual labor. While some planters searched for new high caloric foods, the enslaved community was left to their own devices to

⁶⁹ As quoted by Moreau de Saint-Méry (1958: 61).

find nutritionally adequate meals. The diversity of slave diet was consciously manipulated through the agency of the enslaved community. As a supplement to high-caloric starches, enslaved laborers aggressively sought out foodstuffs with high nutritional value that also satisfied their desire for culinary pleasure. They quickly came to appreciate Amerindian, European, and most certainly African traditions, foodstuffs and preparation styles and incorporated all of them into African-Caribbean foodways.

This next section examines the various factors that influenced the diversity of slave food. I do not attempt to detail all the foodstuffs consumed by the enslaved Africans. Rather, this is a summary of some of the more important products mentioned repeatedly in the historical evidence.

Diversifying Slave Food Products

Environment was a factor that influenced diversity in foodways. The French island colonies generally experienced tropical to subtropical climates with various topographical, pedological land forms. However, the geological character and natural terrain vary. Some islands are volcanic in origin with interior mountains, or are low with extensive plains to hilly limestone formations. The trade winds that temper the weather patterns of the islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique create semi-arid conditions in the western-most region of Haiti (once the colony of Saint-Domingue).

With little soil nutrients only the hardiest of foodstuffs such as sweet potatoes and cassava could grow. While yams, sweet potatoes, and cassava did provide the bulk of meals for the enslaved laborers, the French sought to include more high caloric foodstuffs such as corn, and other cereals that would diversify slave foodways. Not only was corn considered a cheap and stable foodstuff for the enslaved community, it also quickly spread throughout parts of West Africa throughout the 17th and 18th centuries (Messer 2000a: 97-100, 106).

For areas where corn, rice, and other cereals were not successful, the French considered the pearl millet (*Pennisetum glaucum*), which was suitable for semiarid regions (Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 3 1958: 1238). For consumption, the millet was crushed, boiled and made into a paste-like porridge, called *couche-couche* (Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 3 1970: 1290), which is similar to the Louisiana cornmeal version that also uses the same name (Valdman and Rottet 2010: 277).⁷⁰ Due to the difficulty of crushing the grain to a finer state, the pearl millet (also known as cattail millet) was not a dietary staple for Saint-Domingue until after 1750 (e.g., Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 3 1958: 1296) when milling practices had advanced. After which time, sweet potatoes and cassava were consumed as supplemental foods when available (Debien 2000: 188). Although pearl millet is not a cereal that was cultivated or consumed in France, it was the food of slaves in the French island colonies as well as

⁷⁰ The meal *couche-couche* in Saint-Domingue should not be confused with one of the most cultivated yam varieties of the Lesser Antilles called cush cush yam (*Dioscorea trifida*) (Lassere 1978: 329).

in other parts of the Caribbean. For example, the same cereal in Spanish is called “mijo negro”, most likely referring to its colonial history as a slave food or a staple of many African nations (Rehm 1994: 140).

During the 17th and 18th centuries, corn (*Zea mays*) and rice (*Oryza sp.*) did not significantly contribute to slave foodways (Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 1 1958: 61; vol. 2: 722). Various islands did experiment with cereals on smaller plantations with little success. Rice grows best in plains and valleys (Carney 2001: 391), however, those lands were already occupied by sugar crops. Besides the lack of proper soils, much of the island rice crops failed because of inconsistent rainfalls (Brugnoli 1998; De Datta 1981). When it was cultivated, it was in localized pockets on few islands and most likely too costly to give to the enslaved community (Debien 2000: 189). Therefore, if rice was to be considered a viable slave foodstuff, it could not be grown but had to be imported, which would have been too expensive. While the colonists enjoyed rice it was merely an occasional cereal in the French islands for much of the *ancien régime* (Debien 2000:189).

Corn, originally known as “mahy”, demonstrated a great potential to serve as a significant foodstuff for island inhabitants. Although enslaved Africans sold corn in markets (Moreau de Saint-Méry vol.1 1958: 43), in general, it was not given to the enslaved community. Despite its potential, the planters did not aggressively grow corn stating the field maintenance was too laborious. More often, corn was a

supplemental dish found at the table of the planters who ate it boiled or ground into meal (Debien 2000: 188-189). However, when allowed to have corn, the enslaved Africans often enjoyed it roasted (Debien 2000: 188; Pilcher 2000: 1281).

After 1750, more foodstuffs were introduced onto the culinary landscape of the French West Indies. On the recommendation of naturalists near the end of the 18th century the taro (*Colocasia esculenta*), the potato (*Solanum tuberosum*), and breadfruit tree (*Artocarpus altilis*) were introduced to the colonies (Debien 2000: 213; Moreau de Saint-Méry 1958: 264; Tobin 2005: 3-4, 9). The enslaved community quickly incorporated taro into their diets (Moreau de Saint-Méry 1958: 264) for several reasons. Taro, also called dasheen and malanga, is a good source of potassium, manganese, and especially thiamine which prevented the enslaved from developing the Beriberi disease so common during the first centuries of slavery in the New World.⁷¹ When cooked, taro has a similar food value to potatoes in that the starchy root is a good source of carbohydrates for energy and could be harvested and prepared much like other tubers the enslaved already adapted into their foodways (Barlow 1993: 117; Ensminger 1993: 2096; Wang 1983). Moreover, the plant has edible large green sheet-like leaves (called *calalou*) that provide iron, vitamins A and C, calcium, beta-carotene, and folic acid (FAO 1990; Miller 1929; Vaughan et. al:

⁷¹ The plant is inedible in its raw state due to significant levels of toxicity. The toxins are minimized after the plant has been cooked (Scott and Thomas 2000: 155-156).

202). The leaves, much like spinach, add flavor and texture to stews and soups, which are still popular in recipes today.

While the taro root was easily accepted, the potato, native to the New World by way of the South American Andes, was not (Debien 2000:214). The potato (*Solanum tuberosum* L.) was a known tuber since the time the Spanish contacted the Andean civilizations. However, when imported to Europe, rumors circulated that the tuber caused leprosy which prevented people from eating them (Messer 2000b: 191). But by the first decades of the 18th century, the English began experimenting with potatoes in the New World. Vigorously promoted by pharmacist and horticulturalist Antoine-Augustin Parmentier as a viable food source for humans, it was brought to French colonies (Martinique, first) from France around 1780 (Ibid.). The enslaved community was initially skeptical of potatoes. Although it could not rival the popularity of other root vegetables such as sweet potatoes and taro, they were eventually accepted in the slave diet.

The closest competitor to sweet potatoes for slave popularity was the breadfruit.⁷² It is believed that the introduction of the breadfruit, native to the Indian Ocean region, occurred in Jamaica around 1792-3 and from there, the French imported it to their islands (Roberts-Nkrumah 1994: 88; CNAC 1998: 206). Initially,

⁷² While breadfruit became very popular in the French West Indies, there is some evidence that this was not the case throughout the Caribbean. According to Jill Casid (199:23), the breadfruit was so disliked in Jamaica and St. Vincent during the mid-19th century that the plant was used for animal fodder instead of human consumption.

enslaved Africans met the plant with some wariness but it was quickly embraced for several reasons. The tree required little to no horticultural maintenance yet still yielded a substantial surplus. The fruit is not only rich in starch but also has high levels of calcium and phosphorus. It is quite versatile. It can be adapted to sweet or savory dishes and sauces, and was enjoyed grilled, baked, and fried (Debien 2000: 213). Moreover, breadfruit is a high-yielding food plant, with a single tree producing hundreds of fruits per season. Furthermore, breadfruit trees grow relatively quickly and can yield fruit several times a year. With trees spreading throughout the islands, breadfruit became immensely popular with the enslaved community and to the colonists' dismay, one of the few safe and guaranteed sources of food for maroons (Roberts-Nkrumah 1994: 89).

Two other foods that featured prominently in the slave diet were plantains and bananas. As stated earlier in this chapter, bananas and plantains have been part of the Caribbean landscape even before the French began bringing enslaved Africans in great numbers. These plants, native to India, were imported to the Caribbean in the 16th century from the Canary Islands to be cultivated by the Amerindians (Barlow 1993:112; Du Terte 156-7; Lassere 1978: 329). Plantains, in particular, were a fixture of slave diets by the second half of the 17th century (Mandelblatt 2007: 20).

Although both are in the same genus (*Musa*) they are altogether different foods. What could be a bit confusing for English speakers is that *banane* in French Creole means plantain and whether starchy and green or sweet and yellow, it is a food that must be

cooked before consumed. The *figue* is the dessert banana most people are familiar with, which is most often eaten raw. Bananas and plantains are high calorie foods, and excellent sources of potassium, vitamin C and the chemical serotonin, although 20-40% loss of vitamins (i.e., with or without the skin) results from cooking plantains (FAO 1990; Swaminathan and Gangwar 1961).

There is some evidence to suggest that the plantain was a favorite of the enslaved community since the late 17th century (Labat vol. 2 1931: 63). Although it could not be stored for long preservation, each plant can produce large numbers of fruit. The popularity of plantains among the enslaved community appears to have been so strong that Moreau de Saint-Méry stated “in general [the enslaved] Congolese live [for the] manioc and even more [so for] plantains...they like [plantains] so much that one characterizes them while saying: Congo[lese], eater of plantains” (Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 1. 1958: 53). Even after the end of slavery, the popularity of plantains did not wane. Lafcadio Hearn (1923: 218), residing in the French islands near the end of the 19th century, observed “Bananas and plantains hold the first place among fruits in popular esteem;—they are cooked in every way, and served with almost every sort of meat or fish. The consumption of plantains is enormous: more plantains are eaten than vegetables; and more plantain trees are yearly being cultivated. The negro seems to recognize instinctively the economical value of the plantain to which... while an acre planted in wheat would barely support three persons, an acre planted in plantain trees would nourish fifty.” As for bananas,

Hearn said “there are many kinds of bananas here called *figues*,—the...most popular are the *figues-makouenga*, which grow wild, and have a red skin; the *figues-pommes* (apple-bananas), which are large and yellow; and the *ti-figues-desse* (little-dessert-bananas), which are to be seen on all tables in St. Pierre [Martinique]. They are small, sweet, and always agreeable, even when one has no appetite for other fruits.”

One of the most popular and ubiquitous foods of the Caribbean is the mango. There is some debate when mangoes (*Mangifera indica*), indigenous to Southeast Asia, were introduced into the Caribbean. It is certain that a species of this fruit was brought to Saint-Domingue in 1782 by an English sea captain (CNAC 1998: 164). Scholars disagree about when and how the mango was introduced to the Caribbean. Some argue it was brought to Brazil in the 1500s and then it made its way to the Caribbean with sailors and/or Dutch refugees fleeing the Portuguese colony in the early 17th century (Harris 2003: 43). Others believe the fruit’s introduction occurred nearly a hundred years later which would then place its arrival to Barbados around 1742 (Barlow 1993: 118), and in the French West Indies in 1725 (CNAC 1998: 64). The mango contains high levels of beta-carotene and potassium, along with significant amounts of vitamins A, B, and C. Like the breadfruit, mango trees required little horticultural maintenance. Mango trees are also high yielding with different varieties producing at different times of the year thus allowing for a longer harvest season of multiple mango species. Mangos can be consumed in the raw “green” or at ripened stages. By the first decades of the 19th century the mango and

its varieties had spread quickly throughout the landscape and became “the fruit of the (black) people” (Hearn 1923: 218).

Animal Protein

Along with the need for carbohydrates and essential vitamins and minerals, the body requires protein. Although plant protein was consumed via peas and beans, the inhabitants of the French West Indies had strong desires for animal protein. Food historians generally agree that most Europeans of all classes throughout the Middle Ages and afterwards always consumed some amount of meat. But by the 1600s, large quantities of meat in the diet of the upper classes became a symbol of power and status (Cortonesi 1999: 273; Goody 1982: 134; Mennell 1985: 40-46; Montanari 1999: 180). This was most certainly the case in France (Goubert 1986: 88; Le Roy Ladurie 1987; Pitre 2002: 29; Scully and Scully 1995: 146; Vié 1993: 4-5, 14-15; Wheaton 1996). However, during the 17th and 18th centuries in the Caribbean, meat was especially rare. Viewed as a precious commodity, meat was reserved mostly for religious holidays (Moulin 1991: 118). In the French West Indies, the majority of both *engagé* and slave meals were predominantly starched based with rare occasions to consume dried meat during the first half of the 17th century (Donnadieu 2009: 136; Pilcher 2000: 1283). On the contrary, sailors and more prosperous colonists consumed more fresh meat (Satineau 1928: 112). The following is a discussion of the

various forms of meat consumed by the colonists and the enslaved community during the *ancien régime*.

Manatees were a significant part of the Amerindian diet and thus colonists and enslaved Africans throughout the Caribbean occasionally hunted them for their meat and fat (Craig 1966: 43; Gates 2002: 222; Labat vol. 1 1993: 162). According to Père Du Tertre, the manatee was said to have a taste similar to calf “but it is much firmer [and] it is covered in several places of three or four fat [strips]... This fat is excellent [and once dissolved], draw from it the grease which they eat on bread as a butter (vol. 2 1979: 213).

Although manatees were docile, colonists did not find them easy to hunt successfully. Adult manatees have extremely sensitive hearing and would flee at the least ripple of water. If the colonists were fortunate, it was the young, unable to swim away fast enough, which were captured (Labat 1993: 163). Rather, it was the sea turtle that was aggressively hunted for its meat. At the onset of colonization, sea turtles were quite numerous and relatively easy to catch. The best time for hunting was during the spring season, when turtles came to deserted beaches to lay eggs. Enslaved Africans would be sent at night with dogs to retrieve the eggs or hunt for the nesting turtles (Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 3 1958: 1191).

Turtle meat was said to be very similar to beef and quite plentiful. Indeed, the body of turtle, excluding entrails, feet and head, “would easily feed 30 men” (Du

Tertre vol. 2 1979: 239). Moreover, the fat was extremely delicate and married flavors well, especially in many kinds of sauces. For the planter class, turtle meat was enjoyed in various pot recipes such as ragouts, stews, fricassees and soups or pierced by a long, thin rod to be roasted over a kitchen fire (Labat vol. 1 1931: 82). However, the most popular method of preparation was barbecue. Once caught, sea turtles were immediately gutted and grilled on the beach (Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 1 1958: 69). The meat and fat of the turtle was removed then chopped into pieces. Next, several ingredients including cooked egg yolks, herbs, lemon juice, salt and minced peppers were added to the meat. The meat was covered in some greased-laden earth and cooked in a dugout pit in an earthen oven for approximately four hours to produce delicate and succulent meat better than any traditional European oven, according to Père Labat's opinion (vol. 1 1931: 296-297).

While colonists enjoyed sea turtles as fresh meat, there is some suggestion that enslaved Africans skilled in hunting turtles or fortunate enough to be at the right place at the right time as domestic servants, were given undesired portions of turtle meat (i.e., feet, head, entrails) for their consumption (Parkinson 1954: 20; Labat vol. 1 1931: 298; Munford vol. 3 1991: 1054). Although turtle meat was greatly sought after and enjoyed, eventually they were over hunted, making fresh turtle meat increasingly rare. Furthermore, as sea turtle numbers diminished, the demand for the larger cuts went to the colonists while the enslaved were relegated to only a few salted scraps.

With a few hunting exceptions, the enslaved community had limited possibilities to acquire meat during the early years of Caribbean colonization. In general, fresh meat was usually too expensive even for sailors and most colonists throughout the Caribbean and was, therefore, often consumed by the planter class only (Halliday: 72; Higman 1992: 79; Munford vol. 3 1991: 1054).⁷³ One allowance of animal protein was for sick patients. The very ill could receive very small portions of meat or as a bouillon in soups. In some cases in the French West Indies, oxen too old for labor were sold to the enslaved for fresh meat (Debien 2000:172-174). Even so, with sea turtle numbers diminishing coupled with the difficulty of capturing sea manatees, fresh meat was not always available and so a cheap alternative was needed.

Salted Provisions

Generally, meat holds a symbolic importance in the diet of most cultures (Perlès 1999:22). As stated earlier, in French worldview the ability to consume animal protein was directly correlated to status, class, wealth, and power (Goubert 1986: 88; Le Roy Ladurie 1987; Pitre 2002: 29; Scully and Scully 1995: 146; Vié 1993: 4-5, 14-15; Wheaton 1996). While it has historically and generally been

⁷³The only exception was Saint-Domingue. In the early years of the colony, the Spanish were importing and breeding large numbers of cattle on the eastern half of Hispaniola and often brought oxen and cows to the French colony on the western half of the island. However Père Labat found the planters stingy, providing one or two cattle for a plantation with over 100 enslaved persons weekly, when it would have been just as cost effective for planters to supply them with more meat (Labat vol. 7 1742: 193).

accepted that the consumption of meat was essential for human growth and health (e.g., Kiple 1984) recent nutritional studies has contradicted this claim (e.g., Semmes 1996: 26). Although the necessity for red meat in a healthy diet is ethnocentric, many enslaved Africans in the French West Indies wanted animal protein. This desire for meat, particularly through salted rations, held great importance in the culinary needs of the colonial society and was acknowledged as early as 1672 in administrative accounts. Unfortunately, for the enslaved Africans, they were perpetually given the smallest portions when supplies were available.⁷⁴ Article 22 in the *Code Noir* acknowledged that some animal protein was necessary in the slave diet. Colonists drew inspiration from the diet of French sailors and invested in the commerce of salted provisions (Mandelblatt 2007: 20). Salted provisions became a colonial staple throughout the Caribbean islands with nation-specific differences.⁷⁵

During the early colonial period, Irish salted beef, cod, and sometimes, herring imported in barrels were dietary meat staples for *engagés*, planters as well as the enslaved population (Mandelblatt 2008: 37; Moreau de Saint-Méry 1958: 61). Of these salted provisions, for the French island colonies, salted beef held the greatest importance. At least one-third of Irish beef (*le boeuf salé d'Irlande*) was sold to the

⁷⁴ Insufficient salted provisions for enslaved communities were prevalent throughout the New World with the exception of the Spanish colonies. In places like Panama, Peru and Cartagena, the enslaved laborers consumed far more meat rations than slaves in other European colonies in the Americas (Newsom and Minchin 2007: 540). In the case of beef contributions, the Cartagena slave diet had double the amount of meat than their Caribbean counterparts (Newsom and Minchin 2007: 547).

⁷⁵ For example, in the British island colonies enslaved laborers were mostly provided with salted fish, while salted beef was consumed by the British planter class and white working class (Mandelblatt 2007: 28-29).

French during the 17th and 18th centuries because it was relatively cheap (Mandelblatt 2007: 28). This salted beef consisted of the lowest quality and grade. It was a staple foodstuff of the island colonies for planters, *engagés* and enslaved Africans during the early decades. By the 18th century, barreled beef was specifically intended to feed the poor whites, enslaved laborers and the *gens de couleur libres* (free people of color) (Mandelblatt 2007: 37).

The alternative to salted beef was salted fish. Salting had been a common method of food preservation throughout the Mediterranean world since before the 13th century. However, salting local tropical fish was not an option because it turned mealy during the process (Dunn 2000: 276). Atlantic cod (*Gadus morhua*), an omnivorous demersal fish species that inhabits both sides of the North Atlantic (Kurlansky 1997:49), was the best option since it was known as a suitable fish for salting throughout the Middle Ages in Western Europe (Grieco 2000: 314). Naval exploration for potential new colonies around Newfoundland waters found a seemingly endless supply of cod from which France retrieved significant amounts to supply the French colonies (Mandelblatt 2007: 39). Salted cod, known as “morue” in French, could be processed in various ways. For example, *Morue verte* was simply salted codfish. When dried rapidly then salted it is called *morue blanche*; if dried slowly then it is *morue noire*. However, the most popular to be shipped to the colonies was also the cheapest variety—*morue plate* or *morue seche*—cod that was

cut open, flattened, and that required less salt yet remained preserved three times longer than *morue verte* (Courtine 1973: 113; Mandelblatt 2007: 39).

By the late 1600s a “triangle-trade” developed between New England, Africa, and the West Indies. New Englanders traded salted, dried cod to feed slaves on plantations in the West Indies, where they would be traded for molasses, wine, sugar, salt, rum, and tobacco which was then brought back to New England.⁷⁶ French planters would often exchange tafia made at the distilleries on their plantations with sailors for salted products (Debien 2000:175). Salted cod, a great source of selenium, niacin, and vitamin B12, magnesium and potassium, was greatly demanded by the enslaved population. Despite the *Code Noir* regulations, many planters chose not to provide salted fish directly to the enslaved, forcing them to find other means to acquiring salted cod. When shipments were brought to the island colonies, to purchase salted cod the enslaved community would often sell surplus garden products at market or bargain their domestic fowls off to sailors who were desperate for the taste of fresh meat.

Salted cod never surpassed the importance of salted beef in the French colonial diet. Marine piracy and attacks on embargo ships by other vessels associated with countries at war with France affected its distribution around the Caribbean. Some historians suggest that the failure to supply salted beef rested solely on the

⁷⁶ Some authors argue that salted cod was also used to barter for enslaved Africans to be taken to the Caribbean (DeWitt 2010: 31; Williams 2005: 91).

planters. Historian Joseph Leydon argued that the “Irish provisions trade was almost exclusively dependent on the maintenance of a viable white population on the islands” despite the fact the enslaved laborers were larger in number, still growing, and could have made use of the salted products (Leydon 1995: 221). As for why salted cod remained a secondary provisioning food, the problem may have been a direct result of France’s weak provisioning networks in North America throughout the *ancien régime*. According to historian Bertie Mandelblatt, “provisioning networks responded in the first place to the requirements of a traditional naval diet, shared by most European powers, which developed in accordance with the vicissitudes of colonial expansion” (Mandelblatt 2008: 40). Once the trade networks were strengthened, the colonial powers merely worked within those networks rather than searching for alternatives that would disrupt the traditional trade routes of specific commodities; their adherence to national affiliations in trade left American companies to better exploit the missed opportunities (Leydon 1995: 221; Mandelblatt 2008: 40).

Fresh Meat

Since salted beef and cod were not always provided, some enslaved occasionally kept goats, but most often, pigs (Debien 2000: 188). The most dependable source of meat for the enslaved community was pork, which correlates

with the zooarchaeological results (see Chapter 5). Raising pigs was generally low maintenance and they required very little space to prosper. They could be kept near the slave homes and would eat any food scraps. Most importantly, pigs yielded far more culinary and economic returns than other domestic animals (save, perhaps, for cow). Along with ham and other cuts of meat, lard was also valuable. All byproducts could be consumed immediately or sold to others, including the planter, in exchange for money to buy tobacco, clothes, or any other items needed.

The enslaved sought to supplement their starched-based diets with animal protein since salted provisions were unpredictable (Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 1 1958: 61). Those who could not acquire pigs had to find other alternatives for fresh meat. Enslaved individuals with hunting skills could seek out wild birds, frogs, and small terrestrial mammals. Migratory seasons brought the woodpigeon, turtledoves, as well as teals (Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 2 1958: 265). According to Père Labat, some colonists (including Labat) would send the enslaved to hunt frogs at night (Labat 1993: 102). The heads would be removed and the rest was prepared and served as a fricassee, a culinary practice also adopted by the enslaved community (Labat vol. 2 1931: 63).

Some imported European animals brought onto the Caribbean landscape were also hunted. One example was the rabbit. They were consumed in large quantities by the colonists and the enslaved (Du Tertre 1979: 310), although rabbit was not

identified in our faunal assemblage. The agouti (*Dasyprocta sp.*), known as the “West Indian rabbit”, is related to the guinea pig, and was a common species throughout the Lesser Antilles although it has been argued that the agouti is not native to the Caribbean but rather was introduced as game (Pregill et. al 1988). These large rodents were prey for humans and mongooses. According to Père Du Tertre, the Amerindians sought the herbivore rodent for food and prized its teeth as ceremonial jewelry (Du Tertre 1979: 309). The enslaved laborers, originally forced to hunt the agouti to prevent them from eating the sugar cane crops, saw their potential as fresh meat. While Amerindians and the enslaved Africans enjoyed agouti, it was rarely hunted for food by the colonists. The scent of the dry meat (how it was to be prepared and consumed) was said to be offensive to European senses (Ibid.). The agoutis on the French islands were hunted to near extinction by the 18th century.

Other meat delicacies that would have been less popular but possibly consumed were opossums and bats (Hearn 1923: 309). Opossums, called *manicou*, were most likely prepared like agouti or used as stewing meat. On Guadeloupe, according to one governmental official at the wildlife and environmental bureau, the need for animal protein drove some to hunt the “guimbo”, more commonly known as the Jamaican Fruit-Eating Bat (*Artibeus jamaicensis*), although this is a tradition that has fallen out of practice (Diren et Oncfs 2004).

For the enslaved Africans, animal protein was an absolute necessity to their diets and they would not go without it. When meat rations were not available or when slave owners “forgot” to purchase them the enslaved community was known to run away, steal pigs, boycott their work regimes, or instigate rebellions (Debien 2000: 172). Some were desperate enough to kill old horses and other beasts of burden for food (Du Tertre 1979: 516). This disturbed French sensibilities to such an extent that an ordinance was written requesting planters to remove all exhausted animals far from the plantation and discard them into the sea (Du Tertre 1979: 516).

For those fortunate enough to live on plantations near the ocean or by waterways, there were substantial marine and aquatic forms of animal protein as evidenced by the faunal remains analyzed for this research. Whenever possible, the enslaved would steal away to collect crustaceans, shellfish, and if skilled, fish (Moreau de Saint-Méry 1958: 219). With significant coral reefs and intertidal zones with sandy bottoms around the islands, fishermen could retrieve a significant amount of fish relatively close to the shore. First-hand accounts remark on the wide variety of fish, first caught by the Amerindians then by the colonists (Du Tertre 1979; Labat 1931; Moreau de Saint-Méry 1958; Price 1966a, 1966b). Some of the more popular species included the nurse shark (*Ginglymostoma cirratum*), snappers (Genus *Lutjanus*), dolphinfish (*Coryphaena hippurus* L.), ballyhoo (*Hemiramphus brasiliensis* L.), and spotted trunkfish (*Lactophrys bicaudalis*) (CNAC 1998). As plentiful as fish were, it did not figure as strongly in the slave foodways as shellfish.

Even if an enslaved person acquired fishing skills, often there was too little time allotted and resources available to participate in this subsistence strategy. Rather, it's mostly like that the planters and their families were the major consumers of fish. However, shellfish located on the shoreline required little skill to collect and could be harvested opportunistically at night and by children too young to work in the fields. Good divers could extract various types of sea urchin such as the "edible sea egg" (*Tripneustes esculentus*), white-spined sea urchin, known locally as "chadron" (*Tripneustes ventricosus*) or the long-spined black urchin (*Diadema antillarum*) living in offshore, grassy bottom waters (Barlow 1993: 55-56).

Some of the most ubiquitous shellfish in slave foodways and in current Caribbean cuisine were to be found in coastal shallow waters and intertidal zones. The giant pink or queen conch (*Strombus gigas*), still treasured in the Caribbean, was the most exploited shellfish (Berg 1976; Keegan 1982; Randall 1964; Wing and Reitz 1982). Although it appears that the colonists did not enjoy conch (CNAC 1998: 248), it was a favorite of the enslaved community as it was for the Amerindians. It was easily gathered in sheltered bays or littoral areas and produced a large amount of meat that was probably used for stews and fricassees. The second most important marine invertebrate eaten by humans was (*Cittarium pica*) the West Indian Top Shell (Schmidt et al. 2002: 1079), which was the most exploited marine resource at La Mahaudiere according to our faunal analysis. Known as "burgot" or "burgaux" in French, the animal is often found on rocky shores and intertidal zones, has a

relatively large shell, and is easily collected (Robertson 2003: 27-37). According to Père Du Tertre, the top shell is very similar to species known on the French coastline. It was known as “poor nourishment”, daily food of the inhabitants (black and white) who had no fishing and hunting skills to acquire fish or animal meat, or who had trouble acquiring other substantial sources of protein (Du Tertre 1979: 341).

For the black communities of the French island colonies, one of the best natural environments for gathering food was the mangrove swamps. In it and in similar estuaries of fresh, salt, and/or brackish waters, are the homes of numerous young reef fish, small crustaceans, shrimps, mollusks, and bivalve organisms that the enslaved Africans could easily gather as food for soup/stew meals (Du Tertre vol. 2 1979: 247-248). Crabs, in particular, were a favorite of the *engagés* and the enslaved community because they were plentiful, diverse in species, and easy to hunt (Du Tertre vol. 2 1979: 251). In Saint-Domingue, Moreau de Saint-Méry noted that in the late spring and early summer months, “the negroes where [there] be mangroves, [would] feed themselves of oysters and sell some” (vol. 2 1958: 1239). Other resources Moreau de Saint-Méry noted were sardines and crabs (Ibid.). The blackback land crab or “touloulou crabe” (*Gecarcinus lateralis*), white land crab (*Cardisoma guanhumi*), and mangrove crab (*Ucides cordatus*) are still important to island fare. Another sought after shellfish was the big claw river shrimp, in Guadeloupe commonly known as “ouassous” (*Cambaridae family*), which also continues to be a popular choice with local inhabitants. Other easily gathered foods

were the mangrove oyster (*Crassostrea* sp.) and flat tree oyster (*Isognomon alatus*). Once cleaned of all the mud, the oysters were coveted ingredients for soups and stews (Barlow 1993: 54). Other important marine mollusks collected along rivers and seashores by the enslaved and poor whites included tiger lucine clams (*Codakia orbicularis*), chitons (*Chiton* spp.) and nerites (*Neritidae* family) (Keegan 2000: 1263).

In sum, for a variety of reasons stated earlier, salted provisions for the enslaved community in the French West Indies were unpredictable. While some enslaved Africans had the luck to live near the shore or estuaries to exploit these habitats for animal protein, this was not the case for all or even most enslaved laborers. The only dependable and accessible source of protein and necessary vitamins and minerals for the enslaved community was plant-based. I turn my discussion now to the diversity of garden products. In general, it is through the use of the varieties of vegetables and fruits, purposely grown by the enslaved community, which ensured a richness of tastes and nourishment to slave meals.

Diversity of Garden Products

While the enslaved community took advantages of terrestrial and aquatic food sources when available, it was their garden produce that provided the most dependable source of the protein in their diets. Throughout the centuries of slavery

the most reliable source of protein came from their legumes, most specifically, pea and bean plants. Peas and beans, as principal plants in slave gardens, had many advantages. Many varieties were conditioned for semi-arid areas and were drought tolerant and quick to mature (just over a month), even in low-nutrient soils. They could be cultivated either as a sole crop or intermixed with sugar cane and cereals such as pearl millet, corn, or with other legumes such as peanuts (*Arachis hypogaea*). Many of the peas and bean species can be eaten immature as a fresh vegetable or mature as a dry pulse, which lends for a different flavor to meals when cooked. Moreover, they could be dried for long-term preservation.

Slave gardens yielded numerous species widely cultivated throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa including the still popular snap pea (*Pisum sativum*); hyacinth or Egyptian bean (*Lablab niger*); pigeon pea (*Cajanus cajan*); garbanzo beans (*Cicer arietinum*); black-eyed pea (*Vigna unguiculata*); and the fava or broad bean (*Vicia faba*). Thus, many Africans were already familiar or accustomed to growing and consuming them (e.g. CNAC 1998: 225-232; Moreau 1958: 61). Some plants were native to Central and South America and were introduced into slave gardens such as the bean family of Fabaceae (*Phaseolus lunatus*), lima or butter bean, and *Phaseolus vulgaris* L. that included varieties such as French bean, kidney bean, haricot bean, field bean, snap bean, and the string bean (Debien 2000: 176; Du Tertre 1979: 104-106; Labat 1993:93).

Enslaved laborers maintained a variety of local and imported fruits, herbs and vegetables in their gardens that provided diversity for their foodways. The “West Indian cherry”, or acerola (*Malpighia glabra*), and soursop (*Annona muricata*), for example, are local to the Caribbean region (Pilcher vol. 2 2000: 1713, 1854). Early imported foodstuffs from other parts of the Americas included the star-apple (*Chrysophyllum cainito*), prickly pear (*Opuntia ficus-indica*), papaya (*Carica papaya*) and guava (*Psidium guajava*) from Central America, while the cherimoya or the custard apple (*Annona cherimola*) and cashew tree (*Anacardium occidentale*), which bears a fruit and nut, are originally from South America (Du Tertre vol. 1 1979: 112-113; Keegan vol. 2 2000: 1273; Pilcher vol. 2 2000: 1747, 1750; Wilson 2000: 1159). Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) is originally from southern China while the lemon (*Citrus × limon*), lime (*Citrus aurantifolia*) and other *Citrus sp.* fruits (with the possible exception of the grapefruit) all originated from Southeast Asia (Keegan 2000: 1273). Along with the coconut (*Cocos nucifera*), that was most likely brought by the Spanish (Picher vol. 2 2000: 1279), many of these fruits have been so thoroughly ingrained into the Caribbean landscape for centuries that they are nearly thought of as native to their West Indian surroundings.

Some of the most popular crops of slave gardens belonged to the cucurbitaceae or marrow family which includes a mosaic of gourds, squashes, melons, and pumpkins (Du Tertre vol. 2 1979: 154-155; Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 2 1958: 61). These numerous vegetables span the range of sweet to bitter/savory tastes

and textures as bulbs, sheets, flowers, stems and tubers, with some that doubled as a container (*couis*) as well as food. Melons, pumpkins and gourds are high in calcium, magnesium, potassium, and beta carotene, and some can be enjoyed raw while others must be cooked. In doing so, squashes and pumpkins cooked into stews and soups serve as a perfect base to naturally flavored starchy tubers.

A great abundance of seeds and plantings were brought from Europe for household consumption as well as for profit. The enslaved community took advantage of the numerous plants and vegetables that arrived at the onset of French colonization: cucumbers (*Cucumis sativus*); lettuces (*Lactuca* spp.); watercresses (*Nasturtium* spp.); spinaches (*Spinacia* spp.); wild and domesticated carrots (*Daucus* spp.); currants and gooseberries (*Ribes grossularia*); beetroots (*Beta* spp.); asparagus (*Asparagus* spp.); and mustards (*Brassica* spp.). Along with fruits and vegetables, the enslaved community grew herbs and other plants that served to add or change color, heat, and texture of their meals. Some of the more common herbs imported from Europe included: garlic, onion, leeks, and shallots (*Allium oschaninii*); celery (*Apium graveolens*); sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*.); basil (*Ocimum basilicum*); mint (*Mentha* spp.); thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*.); sage (*salvia officinalis*); parsley (*Petroselinum* spp.); and fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) (Debien 2000: 183; Du Tertre 102-104). Of course, some of the perennial plants, root vegetables, and herbs were never fully incorporated into the Caribbean culinary landscape and eventually fell out of use.

Newly enslaved Africans, accustomed to the reddish-yellow color and distinct flavor that local palm oil brought to their meals in West Africa, adapted an Amerindian substitute of oil from the seeds of the annatto plant (*Bixa orellana* L.). “Beurre rouge” (red butter), as it is known in the French islands, became an essential ingredient to seafood court-bouillons and for browning pork (CNAC 1998: 31). While the taste was not the same as traditional meals when replicated in the Caribbean context, the look or color was perhaps close enough. West African contributions included the red sorrel (*Hibiscus sabdariffa* L.), a tropical hibiscus plant, that possesses a deep red color and a sweet spiced flavor that is especially suitable for teas and sweet dishes. Native herbs and spices included sweet and hot peppers (*Capiscum* spp.) to add heat and distinct flavor, or to provide layered flavors in a subtle manner. Another spice is bay rum (*Pimenta racemosa*), a close relative to allspice (*Pimenta dioica*), which is ubiquitous in Jamaican cuisine. While the English island colonies experimented with allspice, inhabitants of the French islands since 1665 have been using bay rum to produce subtle flavors and an aromatic scent to sauces and ragouts (CNAC 1998: 32). While cinnamon (*Cinnamomum* spp.) had been introduced to the Caribbean during the 17th century (Du Tertre: 112, 162), late arrivals to make their way into slave and post-slave foodways included Asian spring onions (*Allium fistulosum* L.) after 1755, and tumeric (*Curcuma longa*) which most likely arrived with the first South Asian indentured servants in the second half of the 19th century (CNAC 1998: 39).

Enslaved Women and Colonial Foodways in the French West Indies

While most, but not all, historic evidence cited here failed to consider gender in eyewitness accounts (primary texts) and in the analysis of primary sources (the secondary historical literature), we know that women were very much present in the French Antillean past. Moreover, engendered perspectives of slave foodways allow us to consider enslaved women's contribution to the formation of Creole culture and identity. Through African female agency, the enslaved community's survival was maintained by the management of provision grounds and personal gardens. Throughout the colonial period, observers witnessed how enslaved women tended the slave gardens and provision grounds that provided not only the staple tubers for their diet but also a wide variety of herbs, spices, vegetables, and fruits that supplied them with their most consistent source of protein and other necessary nutrition. Their subsistence activities and food preparation choices and methods also succeed in providing a range of tastes and textures to their meals. Moreover, African women sold the surplus foods from their gardens at markets, fostering an internal economy that fed free people of color as well as the planter class. As it was in other parts of the Caribbean, enslaved women's roles in the local internal economy ultimately aided in the survival of the Caribbean plantocracy.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ See Mintz 1985: 134 and Mintz and Hall 1960 for a discussion of Jamaican internal market and economy.

Over the centuries, much of the eye-witness accounts about slave diet in the French West Indies emphasize an array of carbohydrate foods as its core. Manioc, yams, and sweet potatoes were the most common starches, especially in the early decades of colonization. The enslaved community was not only resourceful in adapting various subsistence strategies to provide foodstuffs for themselves, but they were very creative in their culinary methods to satisfy their need for taste as well as nourishment. While the basis of most meals was carbohydrates, be it by cereal or by tubers, the enslaved community was never satisfied with the minimum provided by planters. Enslaved women created soul-satisfying meals by incorporating meat, herbs, peppers, and legumes to the core tuber foods of their dishes. There are late-18th century and early-19th century eye-witness accounts from various parts of the French West Indies of black women making Creole stews called *calaloux* with legumes, okra, and other ingredients that sound remarkably similar to dishes by the same name still prepared today (Jardel 1977; Léti 1998; Rochmann 2000: 67; Taffin 1985: 300).^{78,79} The historic documents appear to corroborate the interpretations of the ceramic assemblage discussed in Chapter 4. The predominance of coarse utilitarian hollow wares and ceramic and iron cooking pots recovered at La Mahaudière reflects a phenomenon of one-pot meals observed for many slave-associated sites. In

⁷⁸ This word, once spelled as *calaloux*, has been associated with stews and Antillean ragouts since 1750 (Thibault 2008: 206). Although the pronunciation remains the same, the spelling has changed over the centuries. Today, the word is most often spelled as “calalou” in French West Indies and as “callaloo” in the English-speaking Caribbean.

⁷⁹ “The country provides a species of spinaches and okra which one makes calalou (French Antillean ragout) that is praised by the Creoles and is an excellent dish” (Wimpffen 1994: 115).

addition, the faunal evidence (butchery marks, high fragmentation of specimens) also points to this practice of food preparation which appears to have been a long-term, daily foodways tradition.

Remarks

Most historians emphasize the 17th- and 18th-century customs and laws of nourishment for the enslaved Africans with little explanation as to why there is little to no discussion of the last decades of the *ancien régime* until the time of the French Revolution. It may be because of the upheaval and decimation of colonial control over Saint-Domingue that forced most French planters and French official observers to focus on matters concerning the stabilization of France's remaining Caribbean colonies instead. In reading late-19th century eye witness accounts of foodways in the French West Indies, it is clear that much of the same foodstuffs and preparation methods associated with the enslaved Africans were still in use (Hearn 1923). However, this is not to presume that a creole foodways of the French West Indies has remained fixed since slavery. Subsistence strategies were adopted along with foodstuffs from European, Amerindian, and African sources in the creation and production of creolized foodways, yet the process took place over decades, beginning with the Middle Passage voyage. As new plants and animals were introduced to enslaved Africans, and as they became familiarized with the natural habitat of various wild species, enslaved Africans made decisions regarding the content of their diets,

choices no doubt influenced by culture, environment, plantation management, and their status as enslaved. It is hard to imagine that enslaved women, who played significant roles in raising gardens, cooking, and in selling their surplus at market, did not likewise have a major say in what would constitute the diets of their households.

This chapter has focused on the foodways of disenfranchised peoples, both black and white, who were transported to the French colonial islands to work the farms and plantations for the *grands blancs*. As an addendum, free black Creole laborers largely reproduced their ancestors' foodways in the post-emancipation era, as suggested by the faunal evidence for this research (see Chapter 5), as well as the primary sources cited above. Yet change was always afoot within the context of a Creole landscape. With the introduction of South Asian indentured workers, the Creole foodways grew to include India's most popular culinary ingredient, curry, to make *colombo* dishes that would also become a part of their Creole identity.

CHAPTER VII: INTERPRETATIONS

Like other archaeological studies of food and foodways, my work is grounded in the reconstruction of diet and subsistence practices, and I've attempted to frame foodways as a gendered cultural practice laden with meaning. Relying on the understanding that foodways were influenced by a multitude of factors, the preceding two chapters detailed the roles that the environment, plantation management, various cultural traditions, trade, etc., played in its production over time. This chapter is an attempt to synthesize the evidence discussed this far. First, I consider the historical evidence in combination with the faunal evidence from La Mahaudière in an attempt to reconstruct aspects of French Antillean slave foodways. Next, I compare the findings from this research with that of other Caribbean and North American plantations in order to arrive at a broader picture of the enslaved foodways systems across the African Diaspora. I must emphasize that this comparative analysis was somewhat limited due to differences in site chronology, environment, the ethnic and racial demographics for each plantation, etc. That is, there were a number of major inter-site differences that made a succinct and rigorous interpretation very difficult to reach, and instead my purpose here is to offer some insights on similarities and differences in slave foodways.

The second goal of this chapter is to argue that enslaved women, via foodways, were central to the process of cultural identity formation in Guadeloupe. Drawing from feminist and *créolité* theories, I assert that enslaved women exercised their authority and a significant amount of control over subsistence practices. Through their actions, practiced daily, women not only fed and sustained their families and communities through the creation of appetizing meals in the light of limited resources, but they also were central in the re-shaping of their community's identity and culture. Within their culinary articulation of identity also resided a form of collective resistance in that enslaved laborers and their descendants were not passive when confronting the lack of sustenance provided by planters. They took action, exploiting what resources were available to them, negotiating for others (including the right to raise gardens and sell surplus at markets), and chose to shoulder the burden of fending for themselves in the face of an institution that viewed them as cheap and easily irreplaceable labor.

Slave Foodways at La Mahaudière

Throughout the colonial period of the French West Indies, questions about slave nourishment were a central concern. At the onset of La Mahaudière during the last third of the 18th century terrestrial meat was a rare option for the enslaved workers. An examination of the faunal assemblage associated with the last third of

the 18th century suggests that pork was the most significant source of terrestrial meat protein for the enslaved community, even if it was only consumed in limited quantities. As was the case in Europe for peasants, the basis of nourishment for those involved in intense agricultural labor in the French West Indies was a carbohydrate-laden diet. The faunal evidence corroborates with historical records which indicate that planters tried to impose a high-caloric diet with little nutritional value on the slave community, where tubers such as sweet potatoes, manioc and yams dominated slave meals. Historical accounts of early times in the French West Indies detailed how rare beef was in the slave diet, and when available, it was usually in salted form (Debien 2000: 173; *Code Noir* Article 22; Munford 1991, vol. 3: 615). Beef was possibly introduced at the very end of the 18th century or the beginning of the 19th century to La Mahaudière for we did find cow bones associated with the post-1800s occupation of the site.

As France became more invested in the plantation economy and slavery, the state of slave nourishment became a constant source of contention. Whether due to external forces such as the unpredictable importation of food supplies (Munford 1991, vol. 3: 615), or internal conditions exemplified by planters who provided inadequate food provisions (Debien 2000: 175; Du Tertre 1979: 480; Satineau 1928: 266), slave health and nourishment proved to be a continuous issue that was repeatedly reported back to France. The French government interceded by establishing the *Code Noir* in the last decades of the 17th century making slave

owners responsible for providing the bulk of food. However, French administrators' reports repeatedly complained that the Code was ineffective (e.g., Debien 2000: 175; Du Terte 1979: 516; Munford 1991; Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 2 1958: 1120; Satineau 1928: 266).

This lack of nourishment may have been a problem at La Mahaudière. By the end of the 18th century, it is known that La Mahaudière had well over 150 laborers (Gibson 2007: 135) making the plantation slightly larger than average for that time period (see Debien 2000:95; Lasserre 1961: 354-355). The only identifiable terrestrial mammal species recovered associated with food throughout the slavery period are pig and cow. Beef for the enslaved laborers was most often in the form of barreled and salted cheap cuts. For many enslaved communities, pig was the most dependable source of meat because it was less expensive than cattle. Moreover, pigs required little space and were easy to maintain. Most likely, terrestrial meat was not available in significant quantities and it seems the enslaved laborers learned to subsist on other local resources to supplement the lack of terrestrial meat protein. It was one step towards creating a new form of foodways. The faunal record indicates that the enslaved community must have relied slightly more on the marine environment as an alternative source for protein. Marine food sources comprised a significant portion of the slave diet in the pre-emancipation period. More specifically, marine invertebrates contributed just over 50% of usable meat to the slave diet during the late-18th century to the first two decades of the 19th century. In the last decades of slavery and into the

post-emancipation period, consumption of domestic mammals rose in importance (though not by much), contributing nearly equal amounts of meat protein as did marine invertebrates.

The plantation's geographic location greatly influenced subsistence practices: La Mahaudière lies 2.2 km (1.37 miles) to the west of the island's coastline and the enslaved laborers on the plantation were able to take advantage of this proximity to marine resources. However, fish does not appear to have figured largely in their diet during slavery. Only one small, fragmented element of an unidentified bony fish species was retrieved.⁸⁰ The fish element, unfortunately, could not be identified as a part of salted fish provisions nor could it be linked to the local marine environment indicating fishing as a subsistence practice.

When comparing the existence of fish remains at other coastal slave sites to La Mahaudière's assemblage, one must submit to the likelihood that fishing was a subsistence strategy during slavery and the lack of fish bones may be due to one or two reasons. First, as I stated in Chapter 3 when discussing recovery methods, only a few random feature samples were taken for flotation. Of those samples, no faunal remains were identified and, therefore, the few fish remains that were analyzed were recovered using 1/8-inch coarse dry screens only. It is quite possible that more fish remains would have been recovered had we been able to float a large amount of

⁸⁰ It is believed that had flotation samples been taken, more elements would have been recovered (Kelly communication 2011).

samples. The second reason for an under-representation of fish remains may have been caused by taphonomic events. It could be that certain food processing, preparation, and cooking methods, during the slavery period, eradicated fragile fish bones.

The high representation of marine invertebrate remains appears to be the enslaved community's partial response to an insufficient amount of meat protein in their diet and demonstrates how the enslaved community effectively exploited the marine environment. The gathering of shellfish is a low level skill that could be performed by nearly all members of the community. Even French travel accounts documented a tradition of shellfish collecting among enslaved communities of the French West Indies throughout the 17th and 18th centuries to supplement rations (DuTertre vol. 2 1979: 341; Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 2 1958: 1239).

The enslaved community likely took advantage of times of low tide to scavenge for a variety of marine invertebrates. Molluscs such as conch, chitons, clams, mussels, oysters, and other turban-like gastropods are well represented in this sample, attesting to an intensive exploitation of a wide variety of molluscan species (with over ten different taxa identified). But it was the West Indian Top Shell (*Cittarium pica*) that was the most heavily exploited shellfish for the enslaved laborers of La Mahaudière, providing the richest and most abundant source of meat. This reliance on West Indian Top Shell was not particular to Guadeloupe alone.

Second only to the queen conch, the West Indian Top Shell is the most heavily consumed marine invertebrate in the Caribbean Basin (Schmidt et al. 2002: 1079). What this suggests is that dietary choices were not solely about availability. While enslaved individuals may have initially experimented with various marine species as they began to produce a new foodways system within the context of plantation slavery, the long-term consumption of certain species, including the West Indian Top Shell and conch, which continue even today, is demonstrative of culture at work. Those early dietary choices developed into traditional Creole fare, one that was steeped in a heritage of slavery.

Based on the archaeological evidence, animal protein was important to the slave diet at La Mahaudière. The enslaved laborers demonstrated a high reliance on marine resources along with domestic mammals. The slave diet not only emphasized the importance of meat to supplement their nutritional needs but the degree of variety in terms of marine species also illustrated the diversity of tastes and textures within it. Furthermore, diachronic zooarchaeological analysis suggests that as the slave economy approached its last decades, enslaved laborers began to rely on terrestrial meat rather than aquatic.

At the heart of my investigation of slave subsistence practices at Habitation La Mahaudière is the search for the relationship between foodways and an emergent African Guadeloupean identity. As the sugar revolution spread throughout the

French island colonies, it brought about an explosion of sugar plantations on Grande Terre by the mid-to-late 18th century, during which time Habitation La Mahaudière was established. At the same time, the racial demographics on the archipelagos reflected a large enslaved African population with over 50% identified as Creole, those born on the islands of either one or two African parents by 1770. I would argue that the creolization of slave foodways began during the Middle Passage, and expanded its influences to include the incorporation of indigenous foodstuffs as well as those from Asia, West Africa, and Europe. The acceptance of this combination of foodstuffs reiterates the créolists' refusal to accept that their identity comes from a singular, homogeneous location (Bernabé et al. 1989: 13).⁸¹ It was a process of adopting, adapting, and transforming practices to be created, shared, and valorized by others in the community. Moreover, as the créolists stressed that the birthplace and location of their identity and culture was the plantation, foodways exemplifies one of the everyday practices that everyone within the slave village participated in. To be more specific, the food-related places on the plantation that embodied the creolizing process included the slave gardens, provision grounds and the yardspaces between the slave homes where food was grown, processed, prepared, cooked and consumed.

The daily creation and recreation of food practices by the enslaved community became an articulation of Creole culture and self-definition. Take, for example, the ceramics recovered at La Mahaudière. While ceramics recovered

⁸¹ "Neither African nor European nor Asian, we proclaim ourselves Créole." My translation.

included locally produced wares and European imports, nearly all of the coarse earthenwares (glazed and unglazed) were hollowwares used as storage vessels, for food consumption or as pots for cooking on open fires. The prevalence of hollowwares strengthens the argument that many of the slave meals were stews or one-pot meals for a range of reasons that includes low maintenance and a continuation of African culinary traditions (Bower 2008; Ferguson 1992; Genovese 1974; Moore 1989; Samford 1996; Yentsch 1994). My discussion of French eyewitness accounts of *calalou* throughout the French Antillean island colonies (see Chapter 6) corroborates the link between a creolized identity and food in the sense that foodways was shaped by a creolizing culture, one through which the enslaved increasingly began to self-identify with (especially as more were island born). As they participated in the various tasks and decision-making steps associated with foodways, as they imposed meanings upon their cuisine, and as children and newly arrived Africans were drawn into the community through the daily ritual of consumption, food, in turn, shaped people's identity.

Slave foodways may also be understood as an aspect of everyday covert resistance. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, the institution of slavery in the French West Indies privileged labor output over the well being of the enslaved, and slave owners were more likely to work blacks to death and replace them rather than to expend the funds needed to ensure their long-term survival. The faunal and historical evidence demonstrated that slave subsistence practices not only sustained

the enslaved community, they contributed to its reproduction and growth. Moreover, the surplus products of their food practices advanced a slave-based island economy that operated despite ordinances forbidding it.

La Mahaudière vs. Other Caribbean settings

Looking at other slave sites in the Caribbean, there are some generalities that can be made concerning creolization. Colonists on other islands established similar plantation economies to that of Guadeloupe. But by nature, the process of creolization is unfixed, which one could argue is also its strength. Even when the colonies of Martinique, Guadeloupe and Saint-Domingue shared the same colonial background, the process of creolization was unpredictable and varied according to its context. There were differences in environment, plantation crop culture, and racial demographics between islands which resulted in different cultural trajectories for each.⁸² As seen in Chapter 6, the slave diet of the late 17th century did not remain static over the decades. The influx of foodstuffs like breadfruit and taro, as an effort to diversify the slave diet throughout the colonial period, reveals that slave foodways transformed over time. Thus, when trying to compare La Mahaudière's foodways

⁸² Defining and naming this process includes, but is not limited to, Caribbeanness, creoleness, creolization, diaspora, hybridity, metissage, and *antillanité* (Balutansky and Sourieau 1998; Bhabha 1994; Bernabé et al. 1993; Glissant 1999; Hall 2003; Hall 2007; Knecht 1987; Laplantine and Nouss 1997; Manessy 1987; Prabhu 2007).

with those of other plantations some challenges did arise. In the following, I mainly rely on zooarchaeological studies for comparing foodways, but I begin with a related study on human bone and dental samples since the results were useful to this research.

Tamara L. Varney's 2003 dissertation on the reconstruction of diet and life histories of enslaved Caribbean individuals provided an additional line of evidence to consider in interpreting enslaved diets. Her analysis of stable carbon and nitrogen isotope provides intra-island comparative data on dietary practices of enslaved communities for Guadeloupe. Her isotope study included bone and dental tissue samples from the beach cemetery site of L'Anse Sainte-Marguerite, thought to date between 1750-1800, located in the township of Le Moule in the same coastal region as La Mahaudière yet several miles to the south (Varney 2003: 95). Varney's isotope results from 60 individuals suggest that enslaved laborers relied on diverse carbohydrate-laden vegetables, root crops and cereals. Varney's results also suggest that the enslaved laborers consumed a considerable variation of dietary protein that was mainly meat-based, relying on terrestrial sources (domestic livestock and/or wild meats) as well as marine sources (Varney 2003: 215).

In the case of La Mahaudière, estimates of dietary contribution revealed that enslaved laborers intensively exploited a wide variety of marine animals and domestic animals. Marine invertebrates and domestic animals each contributed 50%

of usable meat to the slave diet. However, Varney's data suggests that a greater variety of dietary protein was consumed between individuals. For example, for some individuals the dietary protein sources were more terrestrial based (imported salted meats with possibly some fresh domestic and/or wild meats) while other individuals relied more on aquatic sources, particularly fish. Both patterns of dietary protein at Sainte-Marguerite differ from my findings for La Mahaudière. My faunal evidence suggests domestic livestock was a major source for terrestrial meat with some possible wild meats as well, rather than salted provisions. Furthermore, aquatic-based remains suggest a heavy reliance on shellfish including molluscs, chitons, gastropods, and bivalves and not on fish. While the dietary patterns at La Mahaudière and for some individuals interred at L'Anse Sainte-Marguerite demonstrate variability between neighboring slave communities, the most important aspect to note is that both groups actively exploited wild species extensively to supplement their diet.

Dietary studies of slave communities from other colonial Caribbean sites suggest similar subsistence strategies of procuring domestic and wild species from land and sea but with an outcome of distinct variability in the type of dietary protein consumed. For some slave communities, dietary protein predominantly came in the form of terrestrial species. Isotopic studies from individuals from Antigua and Montserrat have suggested that primarily marine fish and, at times, terrestrial domestic mammals (with varying amounts of wild terrestrial game) were the main dietary protein sources on slave sites (Varney 2003: 205, 211-213). Faunal studies on

Jamaican plantation sites such as Drax Hall, Seville, and Montpelier suggest domestic livestock (including cows and pigs) were the greatest contributors of dietary protein (Armstrong 1990: 216-225; Higman 1998: 309-316; Weinand and Reitz 1994).⁸³

Sheep, goat, and sometimes chicken occasionally contributed to other slave diets. There is enough historical evidence to state that these animals were kept for their byproducts as well as for their meat. However, the extent of their contributions to diet is not well documented archaeologically in the Caribbean. For example, at La Mahaudière, goats and sheep were under-represented in the archaeological record.⁸⁴ While the remains of an entire young goat were recovered, there was nothing to suggest that it was consumed for food. Goat and sheep bones have been recovered at some British colonial plantations but they were not always assumed to be part of slave diets. At Drax Hall, Armstrong found the presence of goat, sheep, and chicken did increase over time, throughout the era of slavery and beyond. He reasons that the caprine remains recovered during the late 1700s slave occupation, along with pig and cow bones, were consumed as food (Armstrong 1990: 216-217).

While the general consensus throughout the Caribbean is that chickens were kept for eggs and meat, ideas about sheep and goat husbandry are more tentative. After element distribution studies were performed on caprine remains recovered at

⁸³ Cows and pigs represented 34% to 71% of faunal specimens at the Drax Hall, Seville, and Montpelier plantations (Armstrong 1990: 216; Higman 1998: 309-316; Weinand and Reitz 1994).

⁸⁴ Again, the under-representation may be due to taphonomic factors.

Cinnamon Bay plantation sites, Judith Sichler infers that predominantly head and feet elements were consumed as food (Sichler 2003: 163). In other parts of the British Atlantic, caprine remains were represented at Clifton plantation, a coastal property on the west end of New Providence island in the Bahamas. However, Laurie Wilkie and Paul Farnsworth were more reluctant to make similar claims as Armstrong does for Drax Hall plantation, and did not claim outright that sheep or goats were used for food. Based on travelers' accounts to West Africa during the late 18th and 19th centuries which described cows, goats, sheep and poultry being raised, Wilkie and Farnsworth state that one may infer the possibility that enslaved blacks also practiced the same form of animal husbandry (Wilkie and Farnsworth 2005: 217). Their hesitance in interpreting goat and sheep as part of the diet is supported by Klippel's research. On St. Kitts, although faunal analysis showed that sheep and goat were raised locally and slaughtered at or near Brimstone Hill, Klippel's stable carbon isotope analysis on bovid bones suggested that the 18th-century slave community subsisted mostly on imported barrel meats of poor quality (Klippel 2001: 1193-1195). As for other historic sites where faunal remains were recovered, further comparability is limited due to their sample size and/or the fact that only partial zooarchaeological data was provided for them.

In many cases, as it was at La Mahaudière, marine resources were a more significant contribution to dietary protein for the enslaved communities of the Caribbean. On the Clifton plantation in the Bahamas and for several different

plantation sites in the United States Virgin Islands (USVI), marine resources in the form of bony fish and shellfish provided the vast bulk of protein to the enslaved residents (Quitmeyer 2003; Sichler 2003: 155-156, 180; Wild et. al. 1991; Wilkie and Farnsworth 2005: 229).⁸⁵ For Cinnamon Bay and East End plantation and estate sites in the USVI, bony fish and mollusc remains contributed significantly to the slave diet, representing no less than 60% of faunal remains (Sichler 2003: 155-156). While non-local fish taxa were recovered, suggesting that imported fish was a significant part of the diet, it was local fish that was most exploited throughout the era of slavery (Sichler 2003: 172, 178). Interestingly, like La Mahaudière, the East End estate also witnessed a decreased exploitation of marine protein as the utilization of domestic mammals increased over time (Sichler 2003: 180).

It is also interesting to note that all the plantation sites on the Bahamas and the USVI discussed displayed a dependence on marine resources. In the case of the Clifton plantation, Wilkie and Farnsworth explain that historical records showed that enslaved laborers were permitted to have pigs and chickens and even encouraged to practice animal husbandry. The authors suggest that the plantation's proximity to the sea allowed the enslaved laborers to exploit the marine environment for their dietary protein needs while the domesticated animals they raised would not have been kept for personal consumption, but rather sold at market (Wilkie and Farnsworth 2005:

⁸⁵ Bony fish and mollusk remains represented no less than 43% of bone remains at Cinnamon Bay, USVI, Water Island, USVI sites (Quitmeyer 2003; Sichler 2003: 155-156, 180; Wild et al. 1991).

219-220). It is possible that this subsistence strategy proved highly beneficial and was adapted by other enslaved laborers in the USVI as well. That is, the enslaved communities managed to meet their dietary protein needs by relying on marine species, and were able to earn some monies through the sale of their livestock.

For the sites where terrestrial taxa dominated the slave diet, there is also variability in secondary use of marine sources for dietary protein. At Drax Hall and La Mahaudière, molluscan resources were the most significant aquatic contributor while fish was relatively minor (Armstrong 1990: 226).⁸⁶ Fish remains were also under-represented at Seville and Montpelier plantations (Higman 1998: 208-209; Weinand and Reitz 1994: 20). As I stated earlier, despite the under-representation of fish remains in faunal samples from La Mahaudière, it should not be assumed that the lack of physical evidence suggests that there was little to no access of salted fish provisions or fishing activities carried out by the enslaved community. For example, Drax Hall also had a lack of significant fish remains associated with pre-emancipation contexts, despite the proximity of the ocean to the plantation. Furthermore, Armstrong recovered no artifacts associated with fishing activities in slave occupation contexts. However, Armstrong suggests, despite the lack of fish remains, fishing activities appear to have been encouraged, as exemplified by the Drax Hall plantation account books which noted the purchase of fishing hooks and

⁸⁶ At Drax Hall, molluscan remains represented 63% of the marine faunal assemblage while fish represented between 17% and 21% of non-planter contexts (Armstrong 1990: 226).

lines (Armstrong 1990: 244-245). Therefore, it is possible that fishing may have been a strategy for the enslaved laborers at La Mahaudière. While I cannot state with conviction that fish was a part of the slave diet at La Mahaudière, there is evidence at L'Anse Sainte-Marguerite to suggest that some individuals consumed fish more regularly than current faunal evidence suggests at La Mahaudière. The discrepancies of intra-site subsistence practices are confusing and yet intriguing. Reasons for these variations between sites within the same region may have to do with personal choice and or access to certain foods. Regardless, such differences warrant more inquiry.

While archaeological studies suggest that the enslaved blacks consumed adequate quantities of either terrestrial or marine resources or both for protein (if not more so), the evidence is in contrast to English and French historical sources that emphasize a scarcity of animal meat in slave diet (Armstrong 1990; Debien 2000: 172-173; Dunn 2000:276; Foster and Foster 1996: 51; Hall and Higman 1992; Higman 1998; Morrissey 1989; Sichler 2003; Ward 1988: 105; Weinand and Reitz 1994; Wilkie and Farnsworth 2005).⁸⁷ What the faunal and isotopic evidence seems to put forward, in contrast to the historical sources, is that while the slave owners may have made little effort to supply an adequate amount of animal protein for the

⁸⁷ This is with the possible exception of early Spanish colonial America. According to Linda A. Newsom and Susie Minchin in their article "Diets, Food Supplies, and the African Slave Trade in Early Seventeenth-Century Spanish America," *The Americas* 63:4 April 2007, 517-550, enslaved Africans in part of Central and South America appear to have had a higher consumption of meat relative to enslaved communities in other parts of the colonial Americas.

enslaved laborers, the blacks themselves actively procured sufficient amounts for proper nutrition through various subsistence strategies.

At first glance, archaeological reconstructions of Caribbean slave diets suggest that dietary protein was mainly of animal origin and appears to neglect the role of vegetables to supply protein. Historical sources imply that enslaved blacks throughout the islands maintained slave gardens to grow peas and beans among other plants (Mintz 1974: 180-213; Phillippo 1843; Pulsipher 1994: 210, 215; Sauer 154: 21-2). Enslaved blacks in the French West Indies consumed imported and native legumes from their gardens (Benoît 2000: 124; Debien 2000: 176; Du Tertre vol. 1 1979: 104-106; Labat 1993:93; Moreau 1958: 61) and may have occasionally received peas as part of their weekly provisions (Du Tertre vol. 2 1979: 515). While historical sources detail the importance of plant-based protein, botanical analysis of plantation sites are relatively rare and therefore, have not been utilized significantly to further our archaeological knowledge of slave sites in the Caribbean.⁸⁸ As

⁸⁸ There are notable exceptions such as the dissertations, technical reports, conference presentations, and/or published articles on archaeobotanical investigations at Mt. Vernon: (Laura A. Shick 2004, *An Analysis of Archaeobotanical Evidence from the House for Families Slave Quarter, Mount Vernon Plantation, Virginia*. Masters thesis, Department of Public Anthropology, American University), Poplar Forest: (Jessica Bowes 2008, *Initial Results on the Macrobotanical Analysis of an Antebellum Slave Cabin Sub-Floor Pit at Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest*, presented on October 25, 2008, at the annual meeting of the Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology in St. Mary's City, MD), Rich Neck plantation: (Mrozowski, Stephen, Maria Franklin and Leslie Hunt 2008), "Archaeobotanical Analysis and Interpretations of Enslaved Virginian Plant Use at Rich Neck Plantation (44WB52)" in *American Antiquity* 73(4): 699-728), and several slave cabin contexts in Daufuskie Island, South Carolina: (L.A. Newsom 1988, "Haig Point Plantation: Investigations of a Nineteenth Century Plantation, Daufuskie Island, Beaufort County, South Carolina (38BU153)," edited by L. Lepionk, pp.

exemplified by Varney's dissertation, archaeologists have begun to push beyond the limitations of archaeological and archival methods and embrace the use of isotopic data drawn from human skeletons as it shows the potential to illustrate the diversity of human diets (Katzenberg 2000; Keegan and DeNiro 1988; Ubelaker and Owsley 2003). While some scholars have used chemical approaches with surprising outcomes, current isotopic results from historic remains in the Caribbean are often less clear. For example, while Varney's bone and dental analyses provide insights into the complexity of dietary protein via meat intake, vegetable-based protein results is vaguer. The nitrogen ($\delta^{15}\text{N}$) stable isotope values of legumes, even when consumed in high quantity, are relatively low. The amount of legumes that were consumed would be underestimated because their actual stable isotope contribution is masked by the meat protein sources which produce higher $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ (Varney 2003: 221). For this reason it is not possible to estimate the contribution of legumes to slave diet. Regardless, the contribution of dietary protein of plant origin to slave diet should not be underestimated.

261-276. Report submitted to International Paper Realty Corporation of South Carolina, Hilton Head Island.

However, as for the Caribbean region, there is Lee Newson's 1992 SHPO report to C. Solis in Puerto Rico, "Archaeobotanical Analysis of Historic and Pre-historic Contexts from Barrio Ballaja, San Juan, Puerto Rico". Other macrobotanical results for the region are either currently unrealized or unpublished and therefore, could not be retrieved by this author.

Although plant protein contributions are less clear, Varney's study does suggest a substantial combination of rice, root crops (yams, manioc, etc.) and maize or Guinea corn were highly significant as energy providers within the slave diet (Varney 2003: 215). This evidence complements French West Indian historical documents and eye-witness accounts that these were some of the most important foodstuffs and served as the staples of slave diet (Debien 2000:173, 186; Du Tertre vol. 2 1979: 135-138; Labat 1931: 1275; Labat vol. 1 1931: 276-277; Labat 1970: 167; Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 1 1958: 843; Satineau 1928: 264).

From the end of the 17th century, manioc, yams, and sweet potatoes were the dominant tubers of slave meals. White European eye-witnesses repeatedly implied that the general food of the enslaved in islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique was a monotonous array of root crops (Du Tertre vol. 2 1979:138; Labat vol. 1 1931: 176; Moreau de Saint-Méry vol. 2 1958: 1406). This racialized interpolation of culinary value onto the slave diet was yet another marker that fixed the enslaved community's status within the colonial hierarchy.⁸⁹ French colonists and traveling eye-witnesses would *identify* the enslaved community as passive victims when compared with the diverse culinary tastes of the planter class and their accessibility to foodstuffs of high quality. Moreover, this stodgy basis of the slave diet which was repeatedly forced on the enslaved laborers could only stand as an extension of their powerlessness on the lowest position of social hierarchy in the colonial world.

⁸⁹ In some ways, this was a racialized marker although the small French peasant/*engagé* community did share some foodways similarities.

Although the slave owners did not supply the enslaved laborers with substantial amounts of fresh or salted meats, the archaeological record has shown that the enslaved communities were not passive recipients of slave alimentation. Based on archaeological evidence at La Mahaudière, I have suggested that the enslaved community was quite resourceful in their desire for animal protein and employed various strategies to procure meat. Furthermore, an analysis of bone modification also challenges the colonial assumption of a monotonous slave diet. The highly fragmented nature of the animal bones recovered is most likely indicative of stew meals. The popularity of one pot meals, such as *calalou*, was evident as early as the mid-18th century by French witnesses in the colonial islands. Despite limited resources, enslaved women had creative license to incorporate different marine and terrestrial meats, tubers, leafy vegetables to create different meals from a few ingredients. Thus, if the volatile nature of slave owners' generosity made food supplies unpredictable, the quality of the meals could be maintained by these resourceful and inventive cooks. These dishes were left to cook over a fire throughout the day while enslaved African women worked alongside men in the fields, and were ready to be served in the evening after the workday ended. Thus, one pot meals were a central culinary tradition for enslaved Africans and their descendant communities throughout the New World.

The historical timeline of food importation also contests colonial assumptions regarding slave food. New foodstuffs including a variety of cereals, vegetables, and

fruits were introduced onto the colonial landscape between the 17th and 19th centuries were adopted by the enslaved community and absorbed into their foodways. Slave gardens became ever more diverse and enslaved women aggressively utilized procurement strategies that not only supplemented their starched-based diets but showcased their culinary creativity to produce meals that provided highly nutritious sustenance as well as pleasure.

La Mahaudière, Caribbean Slave Diets and North American Slave Diets

Although there is not a substantial comparative data set in the Caribbean to reconstruct slave diets throughout the region, there is enough information to note some generalities. There is a similar dietary pattern of a reliance on wild species, provisioned rations, and animal husbandry to supply animal protein. For islands with a more limited land area, enslaved communities had a stronger reliance on marine resources, particularly fish.

I now turn to the North American counterparts for a comparison of slave diets. While there are some accounts of poor feeding (Goodell 1853: 141), it is generally accepted that the diet of most enslaved communities on southern plantations in North America was adequate if often nutritionally deficient (Fogel and Engerman 1974: 109; Genovese 1966: 44; Sydnor 1933: 38; Taylor 1924: 139).⁹⁰ Notwithstanding

⁹⁰ By adequate, I specifically mean enough calories to simply sustain life.

cultural, environmental, temporal variations and discrepancies, enslaved communities in North America, like their counterparts in the Caribbean, also utilized a combination of strategies that included the acceptance of provisions from the plantation owner and procurement by independent means to ensure food for their families. Enslaved communities created foodways that recall West African traditions in meals that were wild in variety of vegetables and tubers with meat supplements (Yentsch 1994: 198-203). Enslaved communities actively sought to supplement their poor provisions with products grown from their gardens and wild terrestrial and aquatic species through hunting and foraging (Ferguson 1992: 96; Genovese 1972; Heath 1999; Hilliard 1972: 56; Joyner 1991:86; McKee 1988, 1999; Morgan 1998; Phillips 1966: 311; Singleton 1991; Young 1995).

Different historical, economic, and environmental pressures combined with these strategies created inter and intra-site variability consumption patterns throughout the Caribbean Basin. Enslaved communities in the Plantation South also displayed a dietary pattern of a dual reliance on wild species and provisioned rations. Similar variability in consumption patterns has been noted (Adams 1987; Ascher and Fairbanks 1971; Barber 1980; Crader 1984, 1990; Fairbanks 1984; Franklin 1997, 2004b; McKee 1988; Otto 1975, 1984; Reitz 1994; Reitz et al. 1985; Scott 2001; Tuma 2006; Walker 1985; Young 1995). Faunal analysis from antebellum sites in Mississippi, central Louisiana, tidewater and upland sites of Virginia and other upland plantation sites in South Carolina and Tennessee demonstrate an extensive

dependence on domestic animals with a minimum of 60% of individuals represented as cow, pig and occasionally caprine (Crader 1984: 549; Crader 1990: 713; Franklin 2004b: 193-202; McKee 1988: 130; Reitz et al. 1985; Scott 2001; Tuma 2006; Young 1996: 7). In some cases, beef became a more substantial element of early slave foodways than often noted in historical sources. In contrast to La Mahaudière and similar plantations throughout the Caribbean and much of the American South, enslaved communities of Monticello, Mount Vernon and Rich Neck appear to have consumed more beef than once assumed, at least around the end of the 18th century (Crader 1984: 549; Crader 1990: 713; Franklin 1997; Franklin 2004b: 199-200). Maria Franklin hypothesizes that economics may have played a central role for this variation from other plantations. To be more specific, the distribution of domestic meats at Mount Vernon and Rich Neck plantations was tied to planters' wealth and their ability to afford beef and pork (Franklin 1997: 191). Furthermore, this economic determinant may have had a similar influence on enslaved laborers at Monticello.

In general, plantations throughout the American South depended mostly on domesticated animals for their dietary protein. Throughout the slavery period, pork was consumed in the greatest quantity. Beef, some chicken and sheep/goats were secondary. Wild terrestrial and aquatic species were supplemental and generally appear to contribute about 20% at most to these sites. Biomass figures for Rich Neck plantation in Virginia during the 18th century demonstrate an effective exploitation of domesticated livestock. Between 1740 and 1773, over 70% of dietary meat was from

domesticated, provisioned livestock of mostly pig, as well as some cattle, and sheep/goat. This general trend appears to remain after 1773 (Franklin 2004b: 193-197). At Locust Grove, Kentucky, an Upland South plantation, the consumption of domestic animals appears to be even higher (Young 1995: 136,137). It is most likely that enslaved laborers at other Upland South plantations may have also received more dietary meat through domesticated animals than from wild species.

In other cases, the comparative faunal data from slave sites of the American South strongly suggests that the exploitation of wild species was heavily influenced by the environment. Fairbanks was one of the first archaeologists to uncover the exploitation of wild species in slave subsistence practices of Florida and Georgia coastal plantations which contested the historical assumption that planters provided for all of the enslaved community's alimentation (Fairbanks 1984). Soon other archaeologists noted similar patterns in other coastal plantation sites (Adams et al. 1987; Ascher and Fairbanks 1971; Otto 1975, 1984; Reitz et. al 1985; Walker 1985). For example, some scholars have noted that many coastal plantation sites of Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina, and tidewater Virginia exhibited some similar dietary patterns (Reitz et. al. 1985). Enslaved laborers that resided on plantations located on estuaries consumed more fish and shellfish than those living on upland sites in South Carolina and Tennessee as well as areas including laborers that lived on mainland tidewater plantations in the Upper South.

In search of dietary balance and diversity, wild terrestrial and aquatic species contributed no less than 10% of dietary protein as a supplement to the domestic meat raised or provisioned (Crader 1984: 549; Crader 1990: 713; Franklin 2004b: 193-202; McKee 1988: 130; Reitz et al. 1985; Scott 2001; Tuma 2006; Young 1995: 136,137). Hunting and foraging for wild species not only supplied necessary protein that most likely was not dispensed by the planter in weekly provisions, but also allowed for a variety of flavors and textures in meals. Deer, raccoon, opossum, squirrel, rabbit, Canada geese, turkey, pigeon, doves, turtle, fish, alligator and other wild mammals, birds, and fish native to their respective regions, were all important food sources for enslaved communities (Adams et al. 1987: 265; Crader 1990: 691; Franklin 2004b: 195-197; Reitz et. al. 1985: 174). Historians and archaeologists concur that enslaved laborers on coastal plantations extensively exploited their environmental niches more so than their inland counterparts (Adams et al. 1987; Genovese 1972; Hilliard 1972: 56; Joyner 1991:86; Phillips 1966: 311; Young 1995). Furthermore, some archaeologists estimated that wild birds, wild mammals, reptiles, fish, and shellfish provided as high as 40% of meat weight in slave diets (Adams et al. 1987: 241; Franklin 2004b: 193-202; Reitz et al. 1985: 1984). Interestingly, this effective and extensive exploitation of wild species of these estuary plantations of North America appears to be much like the dietary pattern of La Mahaudière.

In my discussion of a dual reliance on wild species and domesticated animals as characteristic of slave diets throughout the Caribbean and American South, I have

briefly addressed how some economic pressures in combination with subsistence practices have created inter-site variability of consumption patterns. As stated earlier, pork was the primary source of domestic meat for most plantations especially during the early decades of slavery. Conversely, beef at Rich Neck and Monticello during the 18th century appears to have played a greater role in slave diet than in the slave foodways of other plantations. The reason for access and distribution of more beef is hypothesized to be related to the planters' wealth. Thus, I wonder if there was a correlation between plantation economics and the reliance on wild species. In other words, was there a link between the size of a plantation and/or its wealth and the enslaved community's reliance on wild resources? In the French West Indies, I have stated several external and internal forces that may have affected plantation economy. However, historians do not include a lack of finance as an explanation as to why the enslaved community had to rely on wild resources to supplement their insufficient rations. But what of plantations in the American South? Was the enslaved community forced to exploit the natural environment because the slave owners could not afford to provide enough domesticated mammals for dietary protein? This question was interrogated by at least one archaeologist, William Hampton Adams. After comparing several different plantations of differing sizes across coastal Georgia, William Hampton Adams' estimates of bone weight, MNI, and biomass did not suggest a

correlation between plantation size or the status of site occupants and a reliance on wild species (Adams et al. 1987: 264).⁹¹

As to the understanding of how foodways and identity are linked, there are certain consistent behaviors that appear to be distinct to an African diasporic culture. The patriarchal colonial societies of the Caribbean and North America were characterized by racial and gender hierarchy. In many cases, the enslaved community may have dominated the racial demographics but socially existed in the margins. Administering to the importance of variability of inter-site consumption patterns, the African diasporic communities relied heavily on a combination of wild species and domesticated animals to provide themselves with adequate and diversified nourishment. These slave subsistence practices, along with some culinary techniques exemplified some retention of traditional African practices and also demonstrated acts of every-day resistance in opposition to the colonial discourse that helped create and reinforce a hybridized identity in the slave community. Furthermore, black women unanimously held the lowest subordinate position throughout the colonial societies, and have often been rendered silent as participants in the formation of identity and culture. Thus, colonial and postcolonial discourses of male dominance in the Caribbean or North American cultural sphere should be brought into

⁹¹ This is in contrast John Otto's hypothesis that there was a direct correlation between social status, ceramic vessel form/shape and dietary patterns. I note that Adams' experiment only engages dietary patterns and plantation sizes of other coastal Georgia sites.

question. While this dissertation does not interrogate the knowledge production of North America and other parts of the Caribbean along the lines of gender, the diversity of experiences along such lines is integral to understanding culture and should always remain a scholarly objective.

Post-emancipation Foodways

In the Caribbean, freedmen laborers who continued to live on and/or near the plantations to which they were once legally bound, foodways patterns did not shift dramatically, especially in the early years following emancipation. This section will briefly discuss the dietary choices and subsistence strategies of the transitional period to highlight any similarities and differences in foodways from slavery to freedom. A fully realized examination of free laborers' lifeways is a vital avenue of inquiry to gain an understanding of the material and historical perspectives of enslaved Africans and their descendants. However, an in-depth interpretation of the post-emancipation social structure of Guadeloupe and other parts of French West Indies, along with a comparative discussion of the American South, not only detracts from my central concerns but is also beyond the scope of this dissertation.

As it was in the post-bellum American South, economic and social conditions for blacks in the Caribbean after emancipation were also slow to change. Many left the plantations to settle in the mountains and remote areas relying on hunting,

fishing and garden crops for food. The Caribbean islands continued an agrarian system where most people worked as wage laborers or as peasant farmers cultivating their land. In places like Tobago, Dominica, Grenada and Guadeloupe a significant number of former slaves acquired land and tried to succeed as independent farmers (Brereton 1989: 99). For others who were less fortunate on islands such as the Bahamas, they were forced to partake in the sharecropping system (Cronon 1996: 288-289; Gaido 2006: 59; Johnson 1991: 184). This struggle for self-sufficient land-based labor led to the formation of a Caribbean peasantry class.

Those black laborers who did not leave the plantations to establish free village settlements faced the similar constraints of economic mobility and racial oppression as they once did under slavery, despite their free status. Women continued to work in the fields while still having to manage the domestic sphere of raising children and feeding their families. But some adjustments did occur. Some black laborers negotiated for shorter work days, control over provision grounds, and demanded formal contracts that in addition to stronger participation in activities associated with the internal economy to raise their standard of living (Fallope: 395-398; Schnepel 2004: 46; Tomich 1995: 247, 251-252). Despite the few changes to their working conditions and living arrangements, I examine the faunal and ceramic evidence to see what changes may have occurred in the foodways of black laborers in the post-emancipation era.

Before 1848 and the end of slavery, due to France-British conflicts associated with the Napoleonic war and disruptions associated with the French Revolution and the Haitian Revolution, Guadeloupe did experience nearly a decade (1794 to 1802) of quasi-freedom. It would be intriguing to investigate and detail if and how the foodways of the laborers at La Mahaudière were affected. Unfortunately, I cannot say how these social upheavals may have been articulated through the faunal data set I have used for this project. Furthermore, the faunal assemblage YDI which does include remains of post-emancipation years also contains fauna associated with nearly the last 40 years of slavery in the 19th century. This complicates any interpretation I could make about the post-emancipation foodways.

However, what can be said is that after slavery, laborers at La Mahaudière continued to rely on domesticated animals as well as marine sources for protein. Throughout the last four decades of slavery into the post-emancipation years, the faunal assemblage suggests that there was some slight variation in the consumption of meat protein. The slight shifts in subsistence practices included a stronger dependence on terrestrial meat over marine resources over time. Domestic mammals continued to provide the major portion of dietary protein while other terrestrial domestic animals appeared in the faunal assemblage. Chicken seems to have entered the diet as possibly more fish. Along with the addition of chicken, demonstrating a change in the diversity of terrestrial meats, it appears that domesticated mammals were consumed more frequently. A shift in dietary choices occurred showing a

greater dependence on domesticated mammals. The percentages of biomass between consumed domestic animals vs. marine invertebrates favor terrestrial meat. While laborers depended mostly on pork, beef consumption did rise slightly.

While the assemblage shows that terrestrial animals were more varied, the same may also be said of marine resources. Collecting shellfish continued to be a favored subsistence practice most likely because of its ease, abundance, and accessibility. However, while wild aquatic foraging practices remained extensive, bony reef fish were procured for food. New mollusc remains included limpets and several distinct species of nerites, cowries, and tritons which marked an expansion of marine invertebrate diversity at La Mahaudière.

As found with the strictly slavery era context, a substantial amount of artifacts recovered from the yard space were associated with food activities. For most households studied by Gibson, the YDI context saw an increase of food-related artifacts.⁹² Falling prices of French imported wares over time helped stimulate an increase of glazed coarse earthenwares and wares at various refined households in the slave village. Furthermore, Gibson noticed an increase of ceramics associated with food preparation over time. For example, cast iron pots, visible in YDII assemblages,

⁹² Gibson's artifact analysis found food-related objects accounted for 40-55% of the YDI artifact assemblage. Her study also demonstrated that individual consumption patterns are sometimes evident. Such is the case with Locus 27. For whatever reasons, be it just personal preference or greater economic independence, laborers associated with that household did not share the same consumption choices as their contemporaries associated with Locus 18 and Locus 19 (See Figure 6.2 Gibson 2007: 240).

continued to be used through the 19th century. However, French glazed Vallauris marmites (cooking pots) dominated the later ceramic assemblages (Gibson 2007: 251-253). Gibson presents two theories for the increase of French imports: the first is based on the affordability of cheaper price of vessels, such as Vallauris, which may have allowed households to acquire more of them; and the second may have been that thinner, more fragile vessels were replaced with more than the thicker-bodied local coarse earthenware versions or cast iron pots (Ibid.). While these are plausible ideas, I posit an additional notion: that in the YDI context the combination of technological advances in sugar cane production, diminished work hours for the laborers, and the decline of planter economic and political control throughout the French West Indies may have given the new peasant class some mobility to initiate changes from plantation owners in desperate need of a workforce; these changes would raise their standard of living above that during the slavery period and eventually influence their consumption of material goods (Fallope: 395-398; Tomich 1995: 247, 251-252). The consumption of new goods, especially more vessels associated with food preparation may have influenced new culinary methods as well.

Again, it cannot be certain that these changes did not occur before 1848 nor can I state that the influx of South Asian indentured laborers were directly connected to these foodways changes. After emancipation, the ethnic, cultural and culinary experience of Creole in the French West Indies became more complex with the arrival of over 70,000 East Indian indentured workers to work the cane fields between

1850 and 1885, often residing alongside black freedmen in living areas remembered as the old slave villages on plantation sites (Lara 2006: 69). The population of the French West Indies, like that of many English islands throughout the Caribbean, was no longer solely comprised of the descendants of African slaves. On Guadeloupe alone, it's estimated that as many as 40,000 laborers arrived to work the sugar plantations with at least sixty workers settling at La Mahaudière after 1860 (Lara 2006: 69; Schnepel 2004: 46; Vragar 2002: 14). The ubiquitous use of curry spices and Colombo meals in the modern cuisine of the French West Indies leaves no doubt that the addition of indentured servants with their distinct culinary practices had a significant impact on the foodways of the black freedmen laborers, but it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to explore the specifics of this.

Post-emancipation periods in other parts of the Caribbean and U.S.

Looking to other Caribbean and U.S. sites for comparable analysis, a similar pattern emerges. In Jamaica, domestic mammals were the predominant source of protein in pre-emancipation periods and this pattern remained consistent in post-emancipation periods. Moreover, at Drax Hall for example, the reliance on terrestrial protein increased in post-emancipation periods and became more varied (Armstrong 1990: 217-226). After slavery, chicken, goat/sheep, and fish became more visible in the free laborer's diet (Armstrong 1990: 226). While terrestrial protein consumption

rose at Drax Hall, fish and shellfish were still a significant part of the diet. The visibility of new mollusc taxa suggests a broadening of procurement strategies from selective gathering of specific species to a more generalized but still intensive collection (Armstrong 1990: 230).

Although there are no studies of faunal assemblages of plantation sites during post-emancipation periods of USVI and the Bahamas currently available, an examination of early nineteenth assemblages provides some insights from which we can draw some generalities about freedmen foodways. It is known that for several sites on USVI dating after 1819 (twenty-nine years before emancipation), the utilization of mammals increased slightly through time, which may have been the case at La Mahaudière as well. However, bony fish and mollusc remains continued to contribute most significantly to the laborers diet (Quitmeyer 2003; Sichler 2003: 155-156, 180; Wild et. al. 1991). Again, as seen with Drax Hall and La Mahaudière, while there were some visible shifts in procurement strategies, overall, there were no significant changes in foodways for the black laborers of plantation sites on the smaller islands. Furthermore, because bony fish and shellfish provided the vast bulk of protein to the enslaved residents at Clifton plantation as was the case for various sites on USVI, I speculate that marine resources continued to be extensively exploited throughout the post-emancipation period.

Throughout the various freemen communities in both regions, their African diasporic identities continued to be constructed and reconstructed based on their specific daily struggles and so their foodways were underpinned by the concept of resistance. As it was in the Caribbean, economic conditions did not vastly improve immediately following emancipation in the American South. While some free blacks left the plantation setting, many did not. Feeling that they had little choice of where to go, and with few skills not directly associated with agriculture, those that remained ironically went back to work on the plantations they were freed from earlier. Planters searched for cheap labor to replace those that did leave and plantations continued to function as mass agricultural production units requiring a large subservient workforce, often with black workers pulled into debt bondage status once they became part of the southern plantation tenancy system.

For many freedmen in some parts of the South their diet was one high in fats and carbohydrates that included processed corn products, pork fat, occasional vegetables, molasses and rice. This postbellum shift in dietary choices, especially one that lacked animal protein, influenced some scholars to argue that diet became worse for blacks after emancipation, resulting in several vitamin deficiencies and protein malnutrition (Hilliard 1972: 62-69; Kiple and King 1980, 1981; Rose 1989: 356).

However, a decline in dietary choices and nutrition was not necessarily the case for every free black community in the South. As such, just as it was in the

Caribbean, many freedmen communities in the American South continued to maintain a dual reliance on wild and domestic species for dietary protein (Reitz et al. 1985: 173; Scott 2001: 684, 686). In some situations, economic improvements pushed changes in freedmen diet. One common shift in subsistence practices is a slight increase in the consumption of domestic animals. For some sites, beef was consumed more over time. At the Nina Plantation in central Louisiana, for example, there is evidence to suggest that black laborers shifted away from one-pot meals and had greater access to vegetables and higher quality of beef than seen previously in antebellum deposits (Scott 2001: 688). For other plantation sites, pig was the greater provider of terrestrial meat. Despite the rise in domestic animal consumption, wild species were still visible in the faunal assemblage, thus, demonstrating their continued (if diminished) dietary importance in black foodways (Armstrong 1990: 224; Franklin 2004b: 201; Quitmeyer 2003; Reitz et al. 1985; Scott 2001: 680, 685; Sichler 2003: 155-156, 180; Wild et. al. 1991).

Enslaved Women, Foodways, and French Antillean Identity Formation

Throughout the colonial period in the French West Indies, there was constant scrutiny and criticism of the state of slave alimentation. The slave diet staples were complex carbohydrates; stodgy foods like cassava, yams, sweet potatoes, guinea corn and rice. Planters were required to supplement these meals with imported salted meat

since fresh products were often unavailable or reserved for the French planters and their families. While French naturalists made some effort to improve and expand the availability of foodstuffs for the enslaved community over the centuries, the general view by French observers of slave food was that it was inadequate and monotonous. Even laws and ordinances passed by the French government failed to force the planters to act more responsibly towards the enslaved community.

Slave foodways in the French colonial islands of the Caribbean was an arena of multiple conflicts: the struggle between planters and enslaved laborers; the struggle between the French administration and slave owners; and also the enslaved communities' struggle to not only survive and sustain life under an institution of racial terror but also to provide culinary satisfaction in their meals. The role of slave foodways was dynamic, and provides a broad context for understanding social power on the colonial landscape. European witnesses and the French planter class viewed slave food as markedly different from their own; the core of the diet was stodgy, based on tubers and cereals with little animal protein or sensual enjoyment.⁹³ I have used zooarchaeological results and historical records to suggest an alternative narrative of slave diet. Isotopic and zooarchaeological analyses of sites on Guadeloupe contradict the literature on historical slave diet in the French West Indies which assumed that the enslaved community had mundane diets with very little

⁹³ That is, unless it was heavily spiced with peppers, a tradition that was particular to enslaved Africans. According to historical sources, the French colonists' use of peppers in their dishes was more conservative when compared with the meals of Native American and enslaved Africans.

animal protein. While studies on Sainte Marguerite cemetery and yard spaces in the slave village of La Mahaudière do demonstrate variability in neighboring slave communities, more importantly, both suggest a more complex dietary pattern than the historical records imply. Although Varney's bone tissue analyses did find the slave diet was carbohydrate-laden, she does emphasize that the enslaved laborers relied on a diverse variety of root crops and cereals. Furthermore, both Varney's and my findings suggest that the enslaved communities resisted colonial discourse of insufficient diet by aggressively exploiting wild species to supplement their provisions and avoid vitamin-deficient, overly starchy meals.

As a form of everyday resistance, the enslaved community consciously tried to maintain as much control and influence over their diet and foodways as possible while reinforcing economic, cultural and racial independence under the constraints of slavery and racial terror. The long hours of fieldwork on sugar plantations would not leave much time for hunting and/or fishing, even if certain individuals could acquire such skills. However, La Mahaudière's location did allow for enslaved men and women, and even children to steal away long enough to retrieve wild aquatic sources that would contribute a significant amount of protein to their diet. This pattern of a dual dependence on wild and domestic meats is a subsistence strategy common throughout the slave regions of the Caribbean as well as the American South and may suggest, to some extent, a shared African diasporic cultural practice.

The French Antillean poetics movement *créolité* provided me with a conceptual framework to visualize how vernacular traditions of aesthetics such as foodways can formulate a space for the individual along with community to express culture and identity. While *créolité* provides an imaginative framework for understanding the creolization process in connection with everyday aesthetics in the French Antilles as a unique amalgamation of various cultural sources born of the plantation, black feminist theories critically assessed that the theoretical discourses about the production of culture and identity are often andocentric. The view of enslaved women, in addition to working long hours in the fields with enslaved males, should expand beyond their responsibility of stabilizing and strengthening their families through additional tasks such as childrearing, caring for the infirm and food preparation (Munford 1991: 567). My archaeological interpretation of gender and identity via foodways was underpinned by a feminized *créolité* vision to re-historicizing the French Antillean past to attest that the culture is best understood through the diversity of nuanced experiences that intersect gender, sexuality, and class. The same historical process of hybridity or creolization that informed African Guadeloupean identity formation also shaped slave foodways. Thus, in studying the link between foodways and identity, it is certain that both enslaved men and women participated in the formation of an African Guadeloupean identity. As with other slave societies of the colonial landscape both genders actively engaged in subsistence strategies for their communities. In particular, I highlight women's roles as the

dominant participants in island markets, the maintenance of provision grounds and smaller slave gardens in their yardspaces, the use of hollowwares as well as holding authority over the private/domestic realm of food preparation and cooking. In the yard spaces between the slave huts, women controlled the domain of domestic chores including processing foodstuffs for the preparation and cooking of meals. In essence, the yardspace was the physical place where the Creole identity was created and recreated.

Although enslaved women were relegated to the most subordinated position within colonial society because of white and black patriarchy, their central role in the production and management of slave foodways became a material representation of African agency and resistance through alimentary praxis of the everyday. These were cultural activities that might have provided pride and pleasure in the act of making as often as it was in eating that helped to create, shape, bond and identify families and communities simultaneously. Out of this everyday practice, women exercised their culinary skills and ingenuity to create a vernacular aesthetic: a distinct, new food system which integrated West African, European, and New World foodstuffs and culinary techniques that would eventually be known as Creole cuisine. Although there were certain generalities common to slave food throughout the centuries, the availability of different foodstuffs was determined by environmental, historical, and economical factors. Because these factors were always in flux, slave foodways, like identity or culture as experienced by African and African descended populations of

Guadeloupe, was never a fixed entity. I have endeavored to illustrate how regional and temporal differences made foodways part of an ever-evolving system and some of these changes to the slave foodways are observable in the archaeological record at La Mahaudière. I stress that this phenomenon was most evident by the end of the 18th century. As the slave population became more creolized, so did their foodways. If the history of slave foodways in Guadeloupe can stand as a metaphor for formation of an African Guadeloupean identity in the French West Indies, by extension, the creation of a Creole cuisine from slave foodways may stand as a metaphor for the forging of an emergent French Antillean culture in the French West Indies.

CHAPTER VIII:

CONCLUSION

With the majority of historic zooarchaeological research in the Caribbean has focused on sites from the Greater Antilles, this project was designed to answer questions about foodways at La Mahaudière, a plantation in the Lesser Antilles. In general, research on faunal assemblages from historic sites in the Lesser Antilles is scarce. My dissertation sought to advance the historic faunal studies of French plantation settings that, as of yet, are not as widely studied as for the British and Spanish contexts. Moreover, I attempted to reconstruct aspects of slave foodways of the French West Indies and also to contribute to the baseline of data from which to compare future assemblages.

For my project, my lines of evidence focused on data associated with the socio-cultural process of foodways, including various aspects of diet, cuisine, foodstuffs, consumption and preparation methods, and patterns. I attempted to reveal how the culinary landscape of the French West Indies represented social practices and symbolic elements that went beyond the basic function of meeting nutritional needs. More importantly, I framed my interpretations on *créolité* and feminist theories to try and demonstrate a link between various forms of everyday food practices and the formation of identity. Moreover, the historical evidence illustrates how everyday culinary activities played a role in the production of identity, a creole and racialized

identity that was interpellated in the negative by whites, yet viewed as essential by the enslaved community. The social relations between the enslaved Africans and others were inherently built on a hierarchy of power and racial differences that were strongly embedded in one's ideology of food. The descriptions of what the enslaved community ate, including their foodstuffs, their preferences for highly spiced dishes, their preparation styles, etc. were signals of inclusion and exclusion that not only articulated but reinforced cultural and racial difference.

Drawing upon feminist theories, I chose to recover women's participation in French Caribbean society, and especially in foodways. Women had a significant role as culture bearers within this system, most often responsible for food preparation and cooking for their families and communities. Finding answers to my questions regarding foodways and the role of women in the construction of an African Guadeloupean identity, in general, has been complicated. There is a paucity of scholarship on enslaved women in the French islands, largely due to the fact that many of the existing primary sources are in poor condition, difficult to locate, or have been destroyed. Despite these difficulties, the archaeological record (of La Mahuadiere and other sites) combined with historical sources have provided me with rich sources of evidence to investigate the role of enslaved women in constructing colonial foodways in the French West Indies.

Although French colonial discourses of race and gender construction attempted to disempower and demoralize women by proscribing them to the most subordinate position in colonial society, enslaved African women were hardly passive. Foodways represented one space within which women could exercise some autonomy and creativity in cultural production that enriched themselves and those around them. What may have begun as survival strategies during slavery developed into a complex culinary expression of group identity. Slave food, which held a pejorative place in the French ideology of food (especially given the prominence of women's roles in producing it), was part of a dynamic and creolizing process. The success of enslaved foodways is underscored by the fact that its distinctive ingredients, flavors, and methods of preparation form the backbone of contemporary (French Antillean) Creole cuisine today.

Enslaved women's culinary creativity, which should be seen as a form of knowledge production, must also be viewed as an identity-affirming practice that was at the core of Creole culture and identity. While scholars usually emphasize enslaved women's resistance by pointing to their roles in rebellions or in poisoning, I maintain that black women's agency was also evident in their daily subsistence strategies and participation in the markets. Foodways were inseparable from the emergent African Guadeloupean identity and if the saying 'you are what you eat' is true then black women should be acknowledged for their role in identity making.

Future Research

The possibility of more historical archeological investigations on other plantations on Guadeloupe and other places such as Martinique, French Guiana, Haiti and St. Lucia will provide intriguing comparative assemblages for study. As there have only been a handful of projects thus far, there is already evidence to suggest how different black lifeways under colonial rule was from one French island to the next as well as an overall distinct Francophone experience from British colonial sites (Kelly 2001, 2004b, 2009). Future comparisons, for example, may include (but not be limited to) the diachronic social and cultural processes of the slavery and emancipation settings of coffee, indigo, and tobacco plantations against sugar model(s).

Research on faunal assemblages from historic sites in the Lesser Antilles is very limited. However, although the sample set is small, my analysis of the faunal remains can contribute to future comparative studies. The zooarchaeological analysis provided an opportunity to gain some insight into the diet and subsistence practices of enslaved and free laborers over time. An increased sample size from other clearly defined houseyard areas would help to construct a more accurate interpretation of lifeways in the slave village since food-related practices involved a myriad of tasks, scheduling priorities, and social relationships within various geographical and spatial contexts on and near plantations. Further excavation and analysis of food-related

artifact assemblages of the yard spaces of other households may reveal new or more complex consumption patterns across space and time. Like my zooarchaeological study, Heather Gibson's analysis of food-related artifacts revealed consumption pattern variations on an intra-site level. Could the differing pattern be cultural or ethnic-based? For example, with the knowledge that Tamil indentured servants lived and worked with free black laborers in the slave village, could there be the possibility of discovering ethnic distinctions between households via foodways? Furthermore, an in-depth interpretation of post-emancipation life at La Mahaudière may illuminate the role of free laborers in the construction of the modern French West Indies.

Another important area for future studies is the multiple of experiences that black women had in the French Caribbean during colonial and post-emancipation periods. With a few exceptions, a focus on gender issues in the French Caribbean has yet to be heavily embraced by historical archaeology or the historical literature realm. Granted, gender may have not have been of great concern to slave owners and European observers of the colonial landscape and may prove difficult to research. However, works by historians such as Bernard Moitt, Arlette Gautier, and Nicole Vanony-Frisch for example, have demonstrated how accessible perspectives on race, resistance, sexuality, and gender during slavery are via French primary archival sources located in various places like Paris, Aix-en-Provence, and various Archives départementales of respective islands in the Caribbean. Likewise, historical

archaeology can follow suit and offer exciting new perspectives on the critical engagement of black women's roles in the French West Indies.

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