

rather than fathers, was one of the means by which literacy was transmitted from one generation to the next, literacy growth depended in part on the opportunity of women to acquire basic literacy skills. In antebellum New Orleans, literacy training by the mother, especially among free persons of color, produced a higher level of literacy among indentured children than in Quebec and Montreal. At the same time, large gender and racial differentials in literacy in New Orleans imposed limits on the increase in the proportion of children who could sign indentures between 1809 and 1843. Public schools subsequently overcame these constraints on literacy growth, but only after the Civil War, when they began to educate all children, regardless of gender and race.

CHAPTER NINE

"To Train Them to Habits of Industry and Usefulness"

Molding the Poor Children of Antebellum Savannah

TIMOTHY J. LOCKLEY

To suggest that the antebellum elite conceived of benevolence as a tool that would help to control the behavior of the poor no longer raises eyebrows among historians of antebellum reform movements. The debate sparked by the work of Clifford Griffin in the 1950s and continued by historians such as Lois Banner and Lawrence Kohl seems to have run out of steam. Griffin and others argued that "social control" was the main motivating force behind nineteenth-century benevolence as elites sought to check poor people's "rampant propensities to low and vicious indulgence." Banner countered this by stressing the genuine desires of the benevolent to assist the poor by opening up new opportunities for them and denying that the elite had a program to mold society into any sort of predetermined shape. In this sense, the elite were only aware of the directions that society should *not* go. Kohl rightly pointed out the imprecision with which the term "social control" was used, noting that it could mean a variety of things in different contexts, and questioning scholars' "excessive concern with motive at the expense of results."¹ Since 1985, historians of antebellum reform have continued to amass evidence as to the motivations of the benevolent, and most agree that a desire to control the behavior of the poor was certainly an important element. There is a crucial difference between "social control" and a desire for reform, however. "Social control," as Kohl pointed out, is widely understood as being "elitist, conservative and repressive," and no doubt many of those involved with benevolence thought that the poor needed to be controlled, sometimes institutionalized, for the benefit of wider society.² Reformers, on the other hand, hoped to give individuals the skills they needed to support

themselves and their families—to foster eventual self-reliance. The process of imparting skills might involve a degree of physical control, to break former habits, but ultimately the control would be lifted so that the reformed individuals could take their appropriate place in the social fabric. While “control” and “reform” might be understood to be competing influences on benevolent men and women, in reality they were complementary. Successful reform produced the best form of control—self-control.

To have the most beneficial effect, reformers quickly realized that their energies would be best concentrated on poor children who, once reformed, would be useful and productive citizens for the rest of their lives. Moreover, children had not usually fallen into the vices of drunkenness and prostitution that older paupers often had and were therefore perceived to be less fixed in their course and more capable of reform. Historians have not been insensible to this, with case studies of orphanages in Charleston and New Orleans, among others, exploring this aspect of benevolence in detail.³ What has never really been tested, however, is whether the reform of children actually worked. It is reasonably straightforward to document the motives of the benevolent and their desires for the future lives of poor children, but no one has tried to trace the lives of poor American children once they left the care of benevolent societies. Did the children follow the paths mapped out for them by the benevolent elite, leading virtuous lives and becoming useful citizens? Or were their lives seemingly unaffected by the assistance they received as children? In order to test the efficacy of “social control” and “reform” ideas and to answer the above questions, I have taken three benevolent societies from Savannah that were exclusively concerned with poor children—the Union Society, the Savannah Female Asylum, and the Savannah Free School Society—and traced the later lives of many of the children they helped.

The city of Savannah, founded on philanthropic principles in the 1730s, was a significant port by the antebellum era. While the city had its fair share of wealthy merchants and planters, the overall population was actually very mixed. The employment opportunities offered by the city attracted hundreds of immigrants, mainly from Ireland and Germany, who joined an existing native-born poor white population, a concentration of free blacks, and thousands of slaves in the urban throng. As one might expect, the lives of the non-elite varied considerably, with age, ability, gender, race, and fortune all playing their part. More than half the white population had no access to enslaved labor, and hundreds did not own land or other property, renting rooms in boarding houses while they sought whatever work they could find.⁴ With so many living a marginal existence, it is unsurprising that a complex network of charitable societies arose to aid the unfortunate, though, as in other southern slave societies, assistance was only available to whites. The Union Society was the oldest benevolent society, founded in 1750, though records only survive from 1783. Originally designed to be a mutual society whereby paying members received the security

of knowing that their relatives and widows would be cared for in the event of an untimely death, the mission of the Union Society gradually expanded to include assistance for any poor or disadvantaged child, regardless of whether their parent had been a member. After 1810 their attention was reserved solely for boys. Managed exclusively by men, the Union Society could claim nearly eight hundred of the leading merchants and planters resident in the city as members in 1860. The Savannah Female Asylum was founded in 1801 on the model of similar institutions founded in Baltimore and Boston to assist orphan girls. Seen as a female counterpart to the Union Society, young girls were housed with a matron in a purpose-built institution from the age of five. The third major benevolent institution concerned with “indigent” children was the Savannah Free School, a day school founded in 1816 that educated both boys and girls, including some on the rolls of the Union Society and the Female Asylum. Both the Female Asylum and the Free School drew support from the female members of elite families; in the 1820s both societies had about three hundred subscribers. For the remainder of the antebellum era, these three benevolent societies maintained their focus on the poor and orphan children of Savannah, and they were eventually joined in the 1840s by a Catholic orphanage, an Episcopal orphanage, and, in the 1850s, by a public school system.⁵

This article focuses on the children who were assisted by the Union Society, the Female Asylum, and the Free School. The surviving records of the Union Society were published in 1860 and contain the names of 246 boys and 22 girls who were assisted by the society between 1779 and 1860. This list seems reasonably comprehensive, though there are some significant gaps in the minutes in the 1820s. The records of the Savannah Female Asylum are not so complete, starting only in 1810 and ending in 1843 for instance, and only occasionally do they list all of the girls living on the bounty of the asylum. Nevertheless, the names of 220 girls can be gleaned from the surviving minutes, mainly from before 1830. The minutes of the Savannah Free School Society are complete between 1816 and 1856, but names of the children only appear occasionally since the school was not involved with apprenticeships like the Union Society or the Female Asylum. Therefore, despite educating roughly two thousand children between 1817 and 1860, the names of just forty boys and twenty-three girls can be found in the Free School records, mainly dating from before 1820.⁶ In addition there were two boys and two girls who attended the Free School while being assisted by the Union Society and the Female Asylum, respectively. This article is based on these 555 poor children (288 boys and 267 girls) and the paths they followed as adults.

As figure 9.1 illustrates, there was no long-term trend in the admissions of poor children to the care of these benevolent societies. The undulations in the chart can, in part, be explained by the records that survive. The small number of boys admitted to care of the Union Society in the 1820s, for example, is

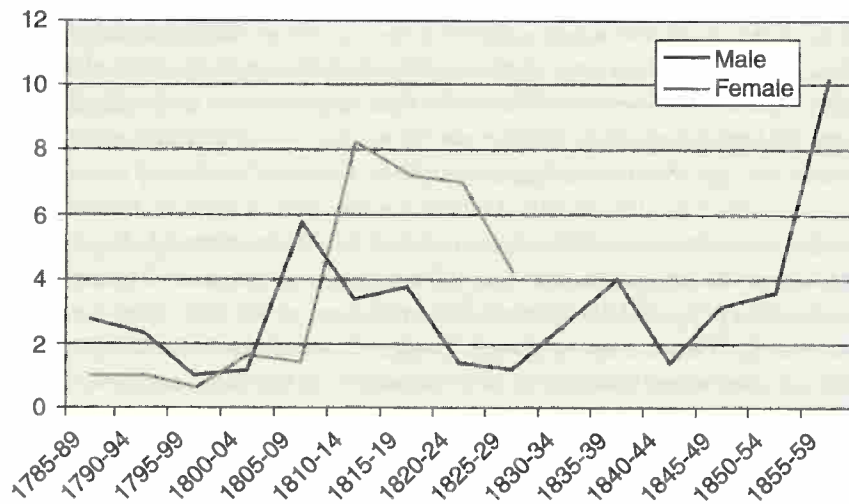


FIGURE 9.1. Five-year moving average of admissions

most likely an underestimate due to record loss and not a reflection of a genuine trend. Similarly, the rapid increase in the number of girls admitted to the Female Asylum around 1810 merely reflects the fact that the earliest surviving minute book dates from this period.

For most of the antebellum period, there were roughly thirty girls under the protection of the Female Asylum at any one time and a broadly similar number in the care of the Union Society. There was, however, a rapid increase in the number of admissions to the Union Society in the 1850s, and this was mirrored by other benevolent societies offering residential care for poor children. In 1850 there were 97 children being cared for in orphanages in Savannah, by 1860 that number had doubled to 197. Over the same period, the number of white children in the county aged five through nineteen had increased only 63 percent, suggesting not only that child poverty was a growing problem in the city in the years before secession but also that institutions were sufficiently flexible to accommodate the increase. John Murray notes a similar phenomenon in Charleston during the 1850s elsewhere in chapter 7, and increased immigration to the urban South during the decade was probably the cause.⁷

Only about a fifth of the children admitted to the Female Asylum and Union Society were full orphans: nearly two-thirds of the children were indentured by their mothers, with a further 15 percent indentured by their fathers. Single parents sometimes used orphanages as a form of emergency child care so that they could go out to work, but on other occasions children were indentured just to reduce the household bills. The Female Asylum admitted one child “whose father is in the habit of locking up his child when out at work

himself” and another from “a large family” because her father could not afford to keep all his children.⁸ In order to secure their control over the children, the Union Society and the Female Asylum each demanded that living parents or relatives sign indentures legally binding the children to institutions, just as they did elsewhere in the South.⁹ The managers of the Union Society were absolutely explicit in their justification of this position: “Whereas it may happen that children who have been schooled by the funds of this society, may afterwards be taken away by their parents, guardians or friends, and instead of being put to some useful trade, or occupation, may be permitted to pursue vicious courses, whereby both they and the community, may be deprived of those advantages, which it was the design of this institution to procure.”¹⁰ On several occasions, mothers who had been prepared to send their children to the Female Asylum changed their minds at the last moment when they heard they would be forced to “relinquish all claims” to their children and be refused visiting rights.¹¹ While mothers were able to make applications for the return of their children, the managers of the Union Society and the directresses of the Female Asylum made individual moral judgments as to the suitability of parents to take their children back. Those who were thought to have a “bad character” or be otherwise unsuitable to act as parents were refused permission to receive their child; only those who had undergone a material change in their circumstances, perhaps through remarriage, were likely to regain control over their children.¹² Mrs. Mulryne, for example, was permitted to take her daughter back, but only if she would “promise, by her future good conduct and example, to deserve the charge entrusted to her.” In order to give the board some guarantee of this, Mrs. Mulryne had to “sign a bond authorising the directresses to take the child back if they hear any thing prejudicial to the future welfare of the child.”¹³ It is noteworthy that the Free School, which did not have powers of indenture, continually complained about the failure of parents to “compel their children to attend more regularly at school.”¹⁴

Once under their legal control, the managers of benevolent institutions began the task of molding and shaping the characters of the children. The Union Society, the Female Asylum, and the Free School shared broadly similar benevolent objectives: each aimed to take disadvantaged children from meager backgrounds and to give them the tools to enable them to become independent adults. Boys taken in by the Union Society were expected to “learn habits of industry and usefulness, become familiar with the use of tools, and with farming and mechanical operations and . . . receive strict attention in their schooling.”¹⁵ The directresses of the Free School sought “to dispense the benefits of education, religion and morality, to a number of children of both sexes . . . to train them to habits of industry and usefulness,” while the directresses of the Female Asylum were in the business of “protecting, relieving and instructing orphan children of their own sex.”¹⁶ Numerous elements of the rules and regulations

of the three societies reflected a desire to control, mold, and shape the bodies and personalities of poor children. The girls at the Female Asylum were to go to church every Sunday "to impress their minds with a becoming sense of God and religion, and the great importance of a modest and virtuous behaviour." Those attending the Free School were also to receive the "important advantages" of religious instruction, while the teacher of the Union Society boys was told to pay particular attention "to their morals."¹⁷

The easiest aspect to change was the external appearance of the children; the girls at the Female Asylum were to be "all dressed alike, in a plain, and simple attire," while the directresses of the Free School insisted that the children should always be "neatly attired." When Andrew Low donated white cotton dresses to the Female Asylum, the ladies decided not to give them to the girls as such clothing might give "them a taste for dress which the board deem it proper to discourage." Those, such as Mary Shearman, who failed to maintain standards of dress were reprimanded.¹⁸ Since cleanliness was next to godliness, the children at the Female Asylum were bathed twice a week, while the teachers at the Free School were instructed "to take notice of every neglect in this particular."¹⁹ Of course, altering the external appearance of the children did not alter their personality, and those providing charity found that reprimands were often not sufficient to elicit reformed behavior. The matron of the Female Asylum brought Amelia Butler and Diana Kirkland before the board of directresses because of their "impertinent conduct." When the girls refused to apologize to the matron, the board ordered that they should be locked up and only fed bread and water, at which point Amelia apologized, but Diana took her punishment rather than submit. The following year Diana, along with two other girls, was again brought before the board on account of her "improper conduct." This time "the board conceived it their duty to reprove them in the presence of the matron, when they presented her with a whip with directions to use it, whenever their conduct made it necessary."²⁰ The teacher at the Free School made a similar judgment about "the necessity of using coercion" upon "a few obstinate characters of both sexes" and was happy to report later that the children were now under a "regular discipline."²¹ The attempts to refashion the children of the poor into model and useful citizens did not always proceed smoothly. The imposition of regulations concerning behavior, dress, and attitudes did meet a degree of resistance from some children, suggesting that the control and reform sought by the elite was not merely passively accepted. Some children went so far as to flee the asylum, often returning to the parents who had been refused official permission to take them. Elizabeth Thrower took just such a course of action in 1823, leaving the board of directresses no choice but to apply to a city magistrate to recover her.²² The number of children, according to the surviving minutes at least, who persistently rebelled against the rules and regulated life of an institution was actually very small. Only about fifteen of more than five

hundred children assisted fled to their previous homes or a new life elsewhere. Nothing is known of what happened to these fifteen in later life, since they apparently did not remain in Savannah. The children who remained at the Union Society and the Female Asylum continued their regimented days, rising at five or six in the morning, and retiring between seven and nine at night, depending on age.²³

While instilling a proper moral ethic in the children was understood to be vitally important, all three benevolent societies also tried to impart the rudiments of literacy and numeracy to the children in their care since education would equip the children with many of the skills necessary for adult life. As one city Alderman put it, "it [education] is a companion which no misfortune can depress, no clime destroy, no enemy alienate, no despotism enslave, at home a friend, abroad an introduction, in solitude a solace, in society an ornament, it chastens vice, it guides virtue, it gives at once a grace and government to genius."²⁴ The studies of other southern societies in this volume confirm that Savannah's elite were not alone in placing an emphasis on the educational role of benevolence. If Savannah's poor children were anything like their counterparts in New Orleans and Charleston, they would certainly have emerged from the institutional experience with far better literacy skills than they went in with, though the sources that would allow us to test this conjecture are not extant.²⁵ Most boys were taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and perhaps grammar, but for girls the educational opportunities were far more restricted. Girls at the Female Asylum were to be taught to "read, write, sew and do all kinds of domestic business," while those at the Free School were also taught sewing and other domestic pursuits, only receiving basic tuition in academic subjects.²⁶ The reason for this differential treatment lies in the different expectations that managers and directresses had for the children. Boys who were intended to become carpenters, blacksmiths, and tailors would need to know how to understand written instructions from employers, how to draw up and sign contracts, how to keep accounts to ensure payment, and how to pay bills and taxes; girls, conversely, were not perceived to need such skills since their lives were supposed to revolve around their future husbands and children. The small amount of formal education given to girls was judged sufficient for them to fulfill their duties as "Republican Mothers" giving their infant children a solid start in life.²⁷

Education of the poor also had wider public benefits beyond the individual child. One correspondent to the *Savannah Gazette* stressed the importance of education as the one thing which could safeguard the achievements of the American republic. By ensuring that children were inculcated with the "principles of integrity and virtue," the legacy of the Founding Fathers would be maintained and even extended "to the latest posterity."²⁸ As the antebellum period wore on, education was perceived to have an increasingly political importance. The subscribers to the Free School were reminded in 1839 that "education is the vital

principle, the key stone in the arch of our political fabric, the essential alimnt [element] of our national existence. If education thus thoroughly and generally diffused is the conservative principle of our invaluable inheritance it requires no laboured reasoning to shew that, that class for who[se] sakes and in whose behalf more especially we are now assembled should be the last to be passed by or neglected." Three years later, the directresses reiterated that education "alone can elevate the minds of our people and teach them to think and support the principles bequeathed by our noble and cherished ancestors." By the 1850s, proper Southern teaching was understood to be the best way to ensure that Savannah's children were not taken in by "Woman's Rights, Spiritualism, Abolitionism, Black Republicanism and Political Demagogism."²⁹

On reaching their teens, most of the children in institutional care were indentured to local citizens to learn a trade.³⁰ The mechanics of indenturing involved the employer and the benevolent society entering into a signed agreement for a set period of time, usually until the child in question reached majority. Since boys averaged fourteen years of age when indentured by Union Society, the average indentured boy would remain in this condition for seven years, until he was twenty-one. The average age of girls indentured by the Female Asylum is not recorded, but as they became free agents at eighteen, it is possible that they did not spend as long in indentures as boys. The "suitable trade or profession" was evidently understood by the managers of the Union Society to mean artisan work. Of eighty-nine boys known to have been indentured to a trade, fifteen were taken as apprentice printers—no doubt valued for their nimble fingers as typesetters—eleven as apprentice carpenters, and the rest as apprentices to cabinet makers, blacksmiths, saddlers, tailors, and other such trades. Seven were apprenticed to merchants, probably to learn the skills of a clerk. The Union Society managers took their responsibility seriously, genuinely trying to find positions for their charges that would lead to a sustainable employment in later life. Concerned in 1817 that "the printing business was not of sufficient importance," managers recommended that boys should instead be apprenticed to "some respectable carpenter, bricklayer or some other mechanic," perhaps recognizing that Savannah was unlikely to support enough newspapers to give work to so many apprentice printers.³¹

The involvement of the Union Society did not cease abruptly when a boy was apprenticed, since on several occasions the boys were later re-bound to a different master to learn a different trade. The minutes do not record, however, whether these moves were due to the death of the original master or to the dissatisfaction of either the boy or the master with the existing arrangement.³² As figure 9.2 demonstrates, the number of boys indentured in any single year was usually one or two, and the number indentured in the 1850s was slightly below the long-term trend. This latter development was most likely a reflection of the relocation of the orphanage to the old Bethesda site in 1855, about twelve

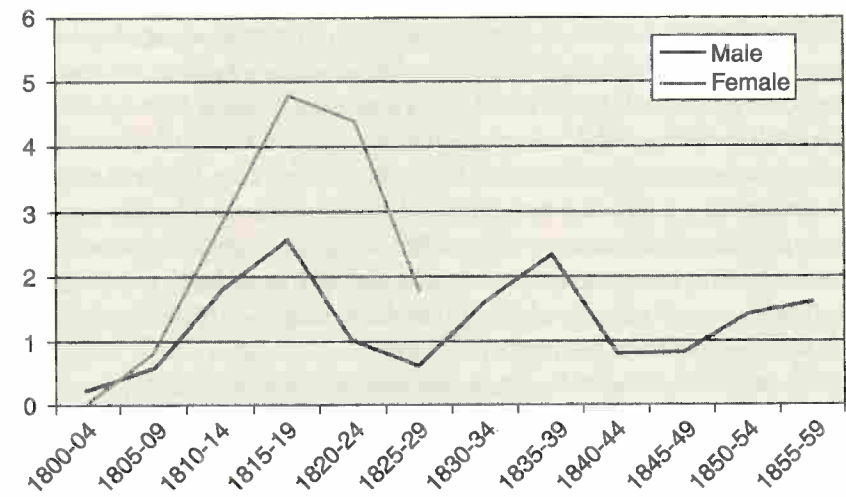


FIGURE 9.2. Children indentured, 1800–1860

miles from Savannah, where the boys were able to gain experience of a variety of agricultural pursuits without the need for an apprenticeship.

The girls attending the Female Asylum did not have the same opportunities for training open to them. Older girls were bound out, hopefully to be taught "millenary, mantua-making, or some business of a similar kind," but otherwise "they shall be placed in good families until the age of eighteen years."³³ Unfortunately the directresses made little progress in finding skilled women to take girls. Only two girls from the Female Asylum were apprenticed to a mantua-maker, and one of those places was arranged by a girl's mother rather than by the board.³⁴ More than sixty other girls were sent out as domestic servants to live with prominent white families and to cook, clean, nurse, and generally work as directed by the mistress.³⁵ While work like this was often arduous, real misapplication and abuse of the girls was not tolerated. The directresses took one girl "again under their protection" because "upon information that she had been cruelly whipt, the directresses thought themselves justified in taking her away"; they removed another girl who was "never allowed to go to a place of worship" and was only employed caring for a small child.³⁶ Moreover, some girls did not wait for intervention from the board before proactively taking matters into their own hands when dissatisfied with their placement.

It is not known if the prior consent of the girls to their placements was sought, as it was by the commissioners of the Charleston Orphan House, but several girls found ways to express their views on their indentures. Sarah Soares, bound by the Female Asylum to Mrs. Plumb, wrote to her mother declaring that she found her work "not agreeable" and that she had decided to leave.

Similarly, Susan Hutchinson refused to be bound to Mrs. Williams and then refused to return to the asylum, prompting the directresses to take legal action against her blatant defiance.³⁷ Mothers also sometimes became involved, appearing in person before the board to ask that their children be removed from a particular mistress. While in general the board of the Female Asylum did not wish its decisions to be questioned or reversed, Mary Ann Flynn managed to get retrospective approval from the board after she removed herself from one employer and selected another more to her liking. The meek acceptance of the board may have had something to do with the fact that Mary's new employer, Mr. Hutson, was a man. To challenge his decision to take Mary was perhaps a step that the board was not prepared to take.³⁸

The problems associated with the binding out system, with the directresses meeting periodic opposition from the girls, their parents, and the employers, led to a complete suspension of binding out in December 1825. Resolving "to keep the children in the asylum... until they were old enough to support themselves," the board instituted a "plan of instructing the children in spinning and weaving, where their services would be turned to more account by being kept in the asylum, learning the habits of regular industry, and thereby saving to the institution the expense of purchasing stocking, thread, frocks &c, &c."³⁹ For unstated reasons, however, the board returned to binding out within a year with the indenture of Nelly Gill to Mrs. Bears in December 1826, though, as figure 9.2 illustrates, without the same enthusiasm of a decade earlier.

The lives of the five hundred or so poor children assisted by the Union Society, the Female Asylum, and the Free School were meant to be clearly mapped out. All had received a basic education to equip them with some of the skills needed to be successful adults, and many had also benefited from job training that would, it was hoped, give them lifelong earning potential. As Paul Lachance demonstrates in chapter 8, education was a crucial factor in social mobility for the poor, and thus equipped, did Savannah's orphan children seize their chance for self-advancement? More importantly, to what extent had poor children absorbed the core message of benevolence—that they should become "useful members of society"—and taken up suitable artisanal trades that would maintain them in life, while shying away from the "degradation and vice" that might otherwise have tempted them?⁴⁰ Had they come out of institutional control with the self-control that would make them genuinely reformed citizens, firmly set on a different course than they might otherwise have been? Tracing the adult lives of former orphans through tax, census, marriage, death, and court records allows us to answer these questions, to measure the effect that benevolence had on poor children in Savannah.

Of the 555 poor children assisted by the Union Society, the Female Asylum, and the Free School, a third of boys and nearly half the girls never appeared again in any type of Savannah city record. In itself this is not very surprising.

Beneficiaries did not ordinarily become heads of their own households immediately upon leaving the care of charitable institutions at eighteen or twenty-one years old: they were more likely to rent a room with a larger family or in one of Savannah's numerous boarding houses. As boarders or lodgers, they did not appear in the city tax records as possessing taxable property, nor were they named individually in federal censuses before 1850. So long as they remained alive, single, out of the criminal justice system, and did not belong to a church, nobody would have kept a record of them. The historical anonymity of many southern poor whites is well known, and can in part be explained by the nature of record collection. To modern historians it is as if they never existed. As years went by, no doubt many former orphans left Savannah for new opportunities in Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas or even just across the river in South Carolina or elsewhere in Georgia, where they became untraceable. Many received free land in western Georgia in one of the seven land lotteries held between 1805 and 1832, since orphans were automatically entered into the draw. In 1827 alone, nine of our sample held winning tickets and probably left the city soon afterward.⁴¹ Nevertheless, nearly two-thirds of our children did leave traces of their lives after childhood, a significant and representative sample, allowing us to gauge how far the benevolent aims of managers and directresses were carried into effect.

Former male beneficiaries of the Union Society and the Free School who remained in Savannah long enough to be enumerated in the federal censuses of 1850 and 1860 were generally engaged in a wide variety of artisanal work. This was in line with the intentions of the managers of the Union Society, who believed that "all well regulated communities must have their mechanics."⁴² The evidence suggests that there was a strong correlation between the trades to which boys were apprenticed and their eventual careers. More boys were apprenticed as printers than to any other trade, and more former orphans were working as printers than at any other occupation. This held true for other trades as well. William Smith, for example, was bound to a painter by the Union Society in 1839 and continued the same trade through to 1860: Leander Moore was apprenticed to a harbor pilot in 1846 and was still working as a pilot in 1860.⁴³ For these boys, the training they received as apprentices had equipped them with the skills to sustain themselves and their families in adult life: Moore was married with two children by 1860, while Smith and his wife had five children. Perhaps because of the education they had received, very few boys were working as unskilled laborers competing for work with slaves and immigrants, and two of the three that were had been taken away by their mother before the Union Society had apprenticed them.⁴⁴

The modest fortunes of most of the former Union Society boys can be demonstrated further by looking at the city tax records. About half of all former orphans who paid tax in Savannah never owned any property and paid only

the poll tax. This tallies well with data from the 1860 census demonstrating that about half of the former orphans did not possess either real or personal estate. Those with personal estate in 1860 rarely had more than a few hundred dollars, suggesting that true financial security was beyond the reach of most of them. There are occasional examples, however, of poor boys achieving far more for themselves than a modest subsistence. Howell Cobb, on the bounty of the Union Society from 1809, was apprenticed for two years in 1813 to Frederick S. Fell, editor of the *Savannah Republican*. On reaching his majority, Cobb became a teacher and by 1827 was a lawyer and a part-time Methodist preacher in upcountry Georgia. In the 1830s he became a state senator, served as a presidential elector, established the *Cherokee Gazette* and wrote a penal code for the state.⁴⁵ With such a prominent career, it is no surprise that Cobb was invited to Savannah to give the Anniversary Address to the Union Society in 1834. In a similar vein, Anthony Soares was apprenticed by the Union Society to Crane and Baker, a firm of bricklayers in 1817. He did not remain in the trade for long but set out for Louisiana, where he evidently became successful. In recognition of the moral debt he owed the Union Society, he sent a \$500 donation in 1833. Both Soares and Cobb were made honorary members of the Union Society.⁴⁶ Among those who remained in Savannah, perhaps the most successful was Solomon Sheftall, a former pupil at the Free School. By 1850 he was working as a doctor in the city and possessed property valued at \$3,000.⁴⁷ These men were the exception, not the rule, but in general it is true to state that most former orphans had skilled trades, reflecting their ability and training, that allowed them to earn enough to live on and that only a few boys lingered in true poverty or left it far behind.

While many former orphan boys can be found in later historical records, tracing the future lives of poor girls assisted by the Female Asylum or the Free School is not an easy task, since among women only widows paid city taxes, and female occupations were not recorded in the federal census until 1860. On the limited evidence available, it seems that few girls who were apprenticed as domestic servants continued in that career for long. Former occupants of the Female Asylum were listed in census records as boarding-housekeepers, milliners, seamstresses, even as a brass and iron foundress, but only once as a domestic. This was not because there was a racial barrier to white women working as domestic servants in Savannah. In 1860, for instance, 266 white women were employed in this manner, but the vast majority of them were young Irish girls newly arrived in the city. Native-born women generally worked at better-paying occupations, though of course, the skills learned working as a domestic to a wealthy family were useful for the girls' own households when they married and had children.⁴⁸ No doubt many young women continued to contribute to their household's income by taking in sewing, washing, and ironing or doing child-care without such work being formally acknowledged or recorded. The degree

of financial security obtained by young single working women, however, was limited. According to the census, unmarried women who had benefited from the bounty of the Female Asylum or the Free School as children owned very modest personal property as working adults, usually no more than \$50.⁴⁹

A possible route to greater financial security open to former orphan girls was a good solid marriage. In general the girls married artisans—butchers, bricklayers, wheelwrights, shopkeepers, and shoemakers, men who were of a fairly similar social status to themselves. About half of these men did not own land or slaves, so although they probably would have been able to provide the basic essentials of food, clothing, and shelter for their families, the husbands of former orphan girls were not a ticket to a life of leisure. Wives married to these men would most likely have had to continue to work in whatever capacity they were able, bringing in vital wages to the household. Some girls had the good fortune to marry property-owners or slaveholders. For these few, marriage was the step that elevated them into a higher social class. Mary Ann Kemp, who had been admitted as a “really indigent” pupil at the Free School in 1817, married lumber merchant Augustus G. Boulineau in 1829. Boulineau's business grew only slowly, but by 1860 he owned real estate in Savannah valued at \$11,000, and Mary herself was credited with owning \$7,000 of real estate. Another indigent girl, Missouri Loper, had been sent to the Female Asylum by her mother at the age of six in 1824 and was apprenticed in 1827 to Mrs. Jones, a manuta-maker. In 1838, twenty-year-old Missouri married Philip R. Douglas, a man of some property: in 1833 he had owned four slaves and farmed two hundred acres in Chatham County; considering her background, this was an advantageous match for Missouri. Marrying a landowner and a slaveholder gave her a measure of economic security that many of her fellow asylum inmates never acquired.⁵⁰

Missouri Douglas did not enjoy the benefits of marrying a property-holder for long, dying in 1845 at the age of twenty-seven. Premature death was not unknown among Savannah's orphans: one in ten died before reaching the age of eighteen, mainly of “dropsy,” a condition today known as edema in which water collects in various body cavities, or of consumption. However, only four orphans succumbed to the 1820 yellow fever epidemic, and none to a later outbreak of the disease in 1854, a very small number considering the mortality the two events caused in the city overall.⁵¹ In part this was because the disease was far more virulent among immigrants, and orphans were generally native-born, but it was also the result of a deliberate attempt to reduce mortality by moving the children to safer climes. In August 1820, for example, the girls at the asylum were moved, on doctor's advice, to a healthier part of the city, and in 1854 both the Union Society and the Female Asylum procured medical treatment for the children in their care. Actions such as those taken during the yellow fever epidemic probably ensured that death rates were actually lower, or at least no worse, for orphans than for children who had parents living.⁵²

It is clear, therefore, that most former orphan children survived the institutional experience to enter into the workplace, making themselves “useful” by “prosecuting the various mechanical arts of the day.”⁵³ Of course, work led to wage packets, and one might argue that orphans were no different from the other citizens of Savannah in wanting to have more than merely enough money to stave off starvation. Where one can test more rigorously if poor children imbibed the message of moral reform thrust at them by the benevolent is by examining the court records of the city. The managers of benevolent societies claimed to “prevent the effects of ignorance and error by imparting that early moral culture which alone insures a life of rectitude and consistency” and to save children “from the temptations, the expedients and the crimes of poverty,” creating instead “upright, valuable and intelligent citizens,” but how successful were they?⁵⁴ The jail and court records for Savannah show that only one former orphan was ever imprisoned; as he was released without charge within a day, his confinement for “rioting” can probably be attributed to youthful high spirits.⁵⁵ Six of the Union Society’s boys did transgress city ordinances as adults and were fined either for “entertaining Negroes on Sunday,” an offense that characteristically involved providing a place for slaves to drink and socialize, or “retailing liquor without a license.” These were fairly minor transgressions, none of the offenders was fined more than \$30, and each only appeared once before the council. Since one of the aims of providing benevolence to Savannah’s poor children was to put a brake on antisocial behavior and the “pernicious consequences that spring from ignorance and idleness,” it seems it was remarkably successful.⁵⁶ In general the orphans conformed to a standard of behavior that the poor usually found beyond them. Hundreds of poor residents of Savannah were brought before the Mayor’s Court for transgressing city ordinances, and hundreds more spent time in the city jail for various crimes, both violent and nonviolent. Yet the drinking, gambling, trading with slaves, and other unseemly and sometimes criminal activities in which the poor seemed to engage with depressing regularity were eschewed by former orphans.⁵⁷ While the children might well have stayed on the right side of the law, they did not necessarily follow the paths laid out for them to the letter. For example, the children received regular religious instruction while under institutional control, yet the membership records of Savannah’s churches show that few orphans actually became full members in later life. If the benevolent hoped to bring poor children into the church discipline network that penalized communicants for offenses such as drunkenness, swearing, adultery, and bastardy, they failed.⁵⁸

Although former orphans seemed to have had enough self-control to keep themselves out of trouble, how far were their views on key political questions shaped by their institutional experiences? As mentioned earlier, an increasingly important element of the education offered to poor children was intended to

shape their attitudes toward the South in general and slavery in particular. One correspondent to the *Savannah Republican* urged all parents to have their children “indoctrinated with your own views and principles, then you will have a fortress against which may swell and lash the waves of Black Republicanism, but all in vain for ‘Just as the twig is bent, the tree’s inclined, ‘tis education makes a fortress of the mind.’”⁵⁹ As we have seen, very few former orphans transgressed city ordinances regarding trading with slaves. In fact, among those beneficiaries of charity who owned any form of property, the most likely form to hold was enslaved persons—usually just one or two, but sometimes as many as six. Choosing to own slaves was partly an economic decision: having enslaved labor to assist in day-to-day work tasks significantly enhanced the amount of work an artisan could do and hence the amount of money he could earn. But that these former orphans elected to purchase slaves, often before they purchased land, shows how far they had imbibed the established social attitudes toward African Americans in the South. Howell Cobb even published his thoughts on the institution of slavery in 1856, defending it as having scriptural authority and describing it as a “great providential enterprise” and as “beneficial to the slaves.”⁶⁰ As native-born southerners who had also received guidance as to the proper way of thinking about the South, it is not surprising that at least twenty former orphans fought on the Confederate side during the Civil War, with Thaddeus Fisher reaching the rank of captain in the First Georgia Infantry Regiment. Among those to serve was Cornelius Long, who as a twelve-year-old had spoken on behalf of the boys at the anniversary meeting of the Union Society in 1857: “I hope we may appreciate the many blessings we enjoy here, and that we may never disgrace it by our conduct, but rather, that we may live to do honor and credit to those who have sustained us.” The managers of the Union Society would indeed have seen Long as “worthy of the care bestowed”—he was killed in action during the Civil War.⁶¹

The managers and directresses of the Union Society, the Female Asylum, and the Free School had therefore achieved many of their ambitions for the indigent children of Savannah. Not only were most working in suitable professions, they were also living sober and decent lives without disturbing the peace of the community. The managers of the Union Society and the directresses of the Free School and the Female Asylum were confident that their work had made a real difference to the lives of indigent children. Thomas U. P. Charlton, one-time mayor of Savannah, believed that “the Union Society hath given . . . citizens to the republic, and sent them forth with minds imbued with the principles of piety and the elements and benefits of a practical education. The Union Society has snatched them from the thralldom of ignorance, and it saved them from the temptations . . . and the crimes of poverty . . . [making them] upright, valuable and intelligent citizens”⁶² A historian of the Female Asylum noted in 1854 that “among the number of beneficiaries many have been worthy members of the

community, have married respectably, and reared up families who have done them credit. . . . Some (but very few in proportion to those that have done well) have gone astray, and even among these very few, some have erred only for a short season; the seed, early sown, had been for while overgrown by the tares of temptation, but have finally borne good fruit.”⁶³ The directresses of the Free School knew there was real pleasure to be taken from “the delight of rescuing a fellow creature from error and ignorance” and especially “by imparting that early moral culture which alone insures a life of rectitude and consistency.”⁶⁴ This wasn’t simply a one-way street however; the poor children who had been given education and training free of charge were well aware of the helping hand they had been given and were suitably grateful for the assistance. Solomon Sheftall offered his “sincere thanks to Mr Cooper for his kind, indulgent and tender treatment to me,” Howell Cobb acknowledged the debt he owed the Union Society “for any usefulness I may be of amongst my fellow men,” and Anthony Suarez also did not forget the “education which was the basis of his fortune.”⁶⁵ It became increasingly common practice for managers and directresses to bring the children to the annual meetings of the subscribers so that the results of their work could be publicly displayed. At the annual meeting of the Savannah Free School Society in 1860, the teacher “introduced to the audience Mr John W. Kern, a former beneficiary of the society and pupil of the school, who delivered an appropriate and eloquent address in the course of which he made a very feeling allusion to the debt of gratitude which he owed the society, who, in his early orphanage, gave him all the education he had ever acquired at school. The address was listened to with profound interest by all present.”⁶⁶ Given the success of their work, the benevolent elite of Savannah could afford to feel justifiably proud.

PART IV

BINDING OUT AS A FAMILY/ STATE RELATION

As Steve Hindle and Ruth Herndon show in chapter 2, pauper apprenticeship descended from English poor law and gave local magistrates explicit authority to rearrange a family. The practice of binding out thus reveals the relationship between the family and the state as represented by local authorities in early America. Community magistrates intended that pauper apprentices should be raised in homes that conformed to their ideas of order. Binding out was in fact the state’s declaration and affirmation of what a “proper” household should look like, and masters were expected to provide such households to the children they took in.

Colonial and state laws illuminate this expectation, that masters would act *in loco parentis* for pauper apprentices, doing what good parents should do for children—“maintain,” “protect,” “educate,” “discipline,” and “govern” them. Delaware magistrates, for example, were authorized to bind out children of any parents “who shall not by the said Justices and Overseer or Overseers be thought of Ability to maintain and educate them” (“An Act for Relief of the Poor”). Such statutes make clear that the state took very seriously the business of childrearing and intended for all children to grow up in a “proper” home; if the children’s own parents were not capable, then the state would provide masters to do the job.

In early America, “proper” homes were places where children were provided with all the necessities of life and were trained in the practical responsibilities of adulthood. Children should receive proper food, drink, clothing, shelter, and medical care. They should learn to work, so as to contribute to the welfare of the larger community. They should receive necessary discipline, so as not to

Workers in the United States with Democracy and the Free Market during the Nineteenth Century (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 13, 31–33.

19. The proportion of free males who were indentured was determined by comparing the number of indentures for birth cohorts with the size of corresponding age groups in federal censuses of Orleans parish from 1810 to 1840.

20. Almost to the very end of the years covered by the indenture books, the indentures were handwritten; but printed forms began to be used around 1840. If printed forms were also used for unregistered apprenticeships, their appearance just at the point when the number of indentures fell to less than ten per year would seem less odd, and at the same time be evidence that informal agreements were still relatively numerous.

21. From 1806 to 1825, the maximum age to which a minor could be bound in Louisiana was twenty-one for males and eighteen for females. The Louisiana Civil Code adopted in 1825 lowered it to eighteen for males and fifteen for females, but the state legislature repealed this revision in the following year. “Act for the regulation of the rights and duties of apprentices and indentured servants” (1806), sec. 1, p. 46; *Louisiana Civil Code* (1825), Art. 159, pp. 162–63, in Louisiana Legal Archives, vol. 3, pt. 1, *Compiled Edition of the Civil Codes of Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: State of Louisiana Printing Office, 1940), 99.

22. Excepting nine children “to be educated” whose average age was 11.5 years.

23. Michel Verrette, “L’alphabétisation de la population de la ville de Québec de 1750–1849,” *Revue d’histoire de l’Amérique française* 39:1 (Summer 1985), 74.

24. The percentage of literate sponsors and masters is calculated from signatures and marks of individuals when found for the first time in the data set, thus avoiding double-counting. See Lockridge, *Literacy*, 133.

25. Campbell Gibson and Emily Lennon, “Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-born Population of the United States: 1850 to 1990,” U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division Working Paper No. 29 (February 1999); <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029.html>, table 21, “Nativity of the Population for the 25 Largest Urban Places and for Selected Counties: 1850.”

26. Claudia Goldin, *Urban Slavery in the American South, 1820–1860: A Quantitative History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 52–53, table 13, “Population Data for Ten Southern Cities, 1820–1860.”

27. Paul Lachance, “The Foreign French,” in *Creole New Orleans*, 118–19.

28. The signature rate was 51 percent for children and 97 percent for masters in both French and English indentures. It was higher, though, for sponsors in English than in French contracts: 61 and 54 percent respectively.

29. Joseph Tregle, *Louisiana in the Age of Jackson: A Clash of Cultures and Personalities* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), 337–43.

30. Lee Soltow and Edward Stevens, *The Rise of Literacy and the Common School in the United States: A Socioeconomic Analysis to 1870* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 52.

31. For examples, New Orleans indentures database, book 3, indentures 124, April 24, 1819 (John Hadfield), and 263, March 7, 1822 (John Smith).

32. Paul Lachance, “Intermarriage and French Cultural Persistence in Late Spanish and Early American New Orleans,” *Histoire sociale/Social History* 15 (May 1982): 81.

33. Jean-Pierre Hardy and David Thierry Ruddel, *Les apprentis artisans à Québec 1660–1815* (Montreal: Presses de l’Université du Québec, 1977), 164.

Chapter 9. “To Train Them to Habits of Industry and Usefulness”

1. Clifford S. Griffen, “Religious Benevolence as Social Control 1815–1860,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 44 (1957): 438; Lois W. Banner, “Religious Benevolence as Social Control: A Critique of an Interpretation,” *Journal of American History* 60 (1973): 41; and Lawrence Kohl, “The Concept of Social Control and the History of Jacksonian America,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 5 (1985): 27. See also C. S. Griffin, *The Ferment of Reform, 1830–1860* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969): 17.

2. LeRoy Ashby, *Endangered Children: Dependency, Neglect, and Abuse in American History* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997): 17–34; Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820–1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978): 1–53, 90–97; Priscilla Ferguson Clement, *Welfare and the Poor in the Nineteenth-Century City: Philadelphia 1800–1854* (Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1985): 38, 50–56; and David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1971).

3. Barbara Bellows, *Benevolence among Slaveholders: Assisting the Poor in Charleston, 1670–1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 121–30; Barbara L. Bellows, “My Children, Gentlemen, Are My Own”: Poor Women, the Urban Elite, and the Bonds of Obligation in Antebellum Charleston,” in *The Web of Southern Social Relations: Women, Family, and Education*, ed. Walter J. Fraser Jr., R. Frank Saunders Jr., and Jon L. Wakelyn (Athens: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 52–71; Priscilla Ferguson Clement, “Children and Charity: Orphanages in New Orleans, 1817–1914,” *Louisiana History* 27 (1986): 337–52; John E. Murray and Ruth Wallis Herndon, “Markets for Children in Early America: A Political Economy of Pauper Apprenticeship,” *Journal of Economic History* 62 (2002): 356–82; and John E. Murray, “Fates of Orphans: Poor Children in Antebellum Charleston,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 33 (2003): 519–45. Others to stress the importance of reform rather than social control include Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers, 1815–1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1997): 35; and Jean V. Matthews, *Toward a New Society: American Thought and Culture, 1800–1830* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 144–48.

4. See my *Lines in the Sand: Race and Class in Lowcountry Georgia, 1750–1860* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001): 23–28. In 1860 there were about 22,000 people resident in Savannah, one third of whom were enslaved. Of the c. 14,000 free people, about 800 were free blacks.

5. The principal sources for these benevolent societies are: *Minutes of the Union Society being an abstract of existing records from 1750 to 1860* (Savannah: John M. Cooper, 1860), hereafter Union Society Mins.; *Savannah Morning News*, April 25, 1860; Savannah Female Asylum, Minutes of the Board 1810–1843, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, hereafter SFA Mins.; Savannah Free School Society, Minutes, vol. 1, 1816–1838, vol. 2, 1838–1856, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, hereafter SFSS Mins.; and *An Account of the Origin and Progress of the Savannah Free School Society* (New York: Day and Turner, 1819).

6. The estimate of the number of children educated by the Free School is based on fifty per year over more than forty years. *Savannah Republican*, November 11, 1856. In its annual report in 1841 the school noted that it had taught 1210 pupils since 1817. SFSS Mins., November 1841.

7. These figures are taken from the 1850 and 1860 censuses. In 1850 the Union Society housed 23 boys, the Episcopal Orphanage 8 boys and 1 girl, the Female Asylum 33 girls and the Catholic Asylum 32 girls. In 1860 the Union Society was home to 69 boys, the Episcopal Orphanage 3 boys and 7 girls, the Catholic orphanage 15 boys and 74 girls and the Female Asylum 29 girls. The number of children aged five to nineteen in the city rose from 2,712 in 1850 to 4,254 in 1860. On immigration, see Dennis C. Rousey, “Aliens in the WASP Nest: Ethnocultural Diversity in the Antebellum Urban South,” *Journal of American History* 79 (1992): 152–64 and idem, “From When They Came to Savannah: The Origins of an Urban Population in the Old South,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 79 (1995): 305–36. The Irish constituted the largest immigrant group in Savannah in the 1850s.

8. SFA Mins., December 1, 1840, August 7, 1823.

9. See Bellows, “My Children, Gentlemen”; and Murray, “Fates of Orphans.”

10. “An ordinance to regulate the terms on which children are to be schooled on the funds of the Union Society,” Union Society Mins., 28–9—April 23, 1795.

11. SFA Mins., February 6, 1840; June 4, 1840; August 7, December 4, 1834.

12. SFA Mins., April 7, 1825; January 2, 1827; October 1831 (refusals), January 2, 1827; August 5, 1835 (success).

13. SFA Mins., November 14, 1822.

14. SFSS Mins., May 4, 1831; see also September 5, 1817; November 24, 1851; April 1855.

15. Union Society Mins., 156—April 26, 1856.

16. SFSS Act of Incorporation, December 19, 1818. *Acts of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, passed at Milledgeville, at an annual session in November and December, 1818*

(Milledgeville: S. Grantland, 1819), 106; SFA Act of Incorporation, December 15, 1810, *Acts of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, passed at Milledgeville, at an annual session in November and December, 1810* (Milledgeville: S. Grantland, 1810), 58.

17. Rule 5 of the SFA, Rule 27 of the SFSS, Union Society Mins., 77—September 9, 1817.

18. SFA Mins., Rule 2, December 3, 1818; February 3, 1820; April 13, 1840; and SFSS Mins., November 1842.

19. [Savannah] *Daily Morning News*, May 11, 1854; Rule 23 of the SFSS.

20. SFA Mins., July 9, 1827, March 6, 1828.

21. SFSS Mins., July 7, 1817.

22. SFA Mins., July 29, August 7, 1823; see also July 29, August 7, 1811; and October 6, 1842; for Union Society runaways, see the lists of beneficiaries in the Minutes.

23. [Savannah] *Daily Morning News*, May 11, 1854.

24. *Savannah Gazette*, January 14, 1817.

25. See John E. Murray, "Literacy Acquisition in an Orphanage: A Historical-Longitudinal Case Study," *American Journal of Education* 110 (February 2004): 172–95, and chapter 8 in this volume. No indenture forms survive from Savannah.

26. *Georgia Analytical Repository* 1 (July 1802): 69. SFSS Mins., November 28, 1825; January 5, 1820. John E. Murray has found a similar gender differential among the children at the Charleston Orphan House. John E. Murray, "Bound by Charity: The Abandoned Children of Late Eighteenth-Century Charleston" in *Down and Out in Early America*, ed. Billy G. Smith (University Park, Penn.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 219–23.

27. On republican motherhood, see Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 13; Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 11–35; Suzanne Lebsock, *The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town* (New York and London: Norton, 1984), 204–5; Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Women's Sphere" in New England, 1750–1835* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977), 96, 141–46; Anne Boylan, "Women in Groups: An Analysis of Women's Benevolent Organizations in New York and Boston, 1797–1840" *Journal of American History* 71 (1984): 497; and Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789–1860* (New York: Knopf, 1986), 66–71, 132–33.

28. Letter of Juvenus, *Columbian Museum and Savannah Gazette*, January 25, 1817.

29. SFSS Mins., January 1839; November 1842; and *Savannah Republican*, October 27, 1856.

30. This was the most common outcome for children at the Union Society and Female Asylum. More than two thirds of boys and girls were indentured; the next most common outcome, for about 15 percent of children of either sex, was to be returned to their mother.

31. Union Society Mins., 70.

32. For example, Joseph Eppinger was first bound to merchant Petit De Villiers and later to carpenter J. H. Ash. John Trevoier was moved from cabinet maker Dougald Ferguson to carriage-maker William Warner, and Alexander Wilson was moved from printer J. M. Cooper to blacksmith L. S. Bennett.

33. SFA Rule no. 6, *Georgia Analytical Repository*, vol. 1, no. 2, July/August 1802, 71.

34. SFA Mins., December 5, 1827. In 1857 the board gave former inmate Caroline Williams \$8 while she underwent training to become a teacher. SFA Mins., February, July 1857.

35. For a discussion of white servant girls working alongside slaves, see my "Spheres of Influence: Working Black and White women in Savannah" in *Neither Lady nor Slave: Working Women of the Old South*, ed. Susannah Delfino and Michele Gillespie (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 102–20.

36. SFA Mins., December 13, 1819; and April 24, 1818; see also October 9, 1823.

37. SFA Mins., August 3, 1815.

38. For examples of mothers intervening, see SFA Mins., August 5, 1818; and January 2, 1823; for the case of Mary Ann Flynn, see April 6, 1820; Bellows, "My Children, Gentlemen"; and Murray, "Fates of Orphans."

39. SFA Mins., December 1, 1825.

40. SFSS Mins., November 28, 1828.

41. Those receiving land in the lottery are listed online at <http://www.rootsweb.com/~gagenweb/lottery/1827/county/byname/chatham.txt>.

42. Address of Howell Cobb, 18 (paginated separately in Union Society Mins.).

43. Union Society Mins., Federal Census for Chatham County, 1860.

44. It was mainly Irish-born laborers, for example, who built the Chatham County sections of the Savannah, Ogeechee, and Altamaha Canal. *Daily Georgian*, April 20, June 26, and November 17, 1827. Savannah City Council Minutes (Georgia Historical Society), August 30, 1827.

45. For a biography of Cobb, see Horace Montgomery, "The Two Howell Cobbs: A Case of Mistaken Identity," *Journal of Southern History* 28 (1962): 348–55.

46. Union Society Mins., 68, 104.

47. Sheftall had written a letter of thanks to the directresses of the Free School in 1825. SFSS Mins., May 11, 1825.

48. See Lockley, "Spheres of Influence," 111.

49. Charity Green and Betsey McPike both had personal estates of \$50 in 1860, and both were working as seamstresses.

50. Data on marriages and deaths come from *Marriages Of Chatham County, Georgia. Vol. 1, 1748–1852; Vol. 2, 1852–1877* (Savannah: Georgia Historical Society, 1993) and *Register Of Deaths In Savannah, Georgia. 6 Vols. 1803–1847* (Savannah: Georgia Historical Society, 1989). The directresses of the SFA on one occasion gave a tea set to one of the girls as a wedding present. SFA Mins., October 1831.

51. Both epidemics killed about six hundred people, though only about 10 percent were native-born Savannahians. William R. Waring, *Report to the City Council of Savannah on the Epidemic Disease of 1820* (Savannah: Henry P. Russell, 1821), 3, 62; and W. Duncan, M.D., *Tabulated Mortuary Records of the City of Savannah, from January 1, 1854 to December 31, 1869* (Savannah: Morning News Press, 1870), 9.

52. SFA Mins., September 7, 1820; SFA records, Folder 11, Admissions and Dismissions; Union Society Mins., April 23, 1855, p. 141. Only one of the girls resident at the Female Asylum in 1860 was foreign-born, Canadian-born Margaret Donnelley. Murray, "Bound to Charity," 224–25.

53. SFSS Mins., November 24, 1851.

54. SFSS Mins., November 28, 1848; *Address of the Hon Thomas U.P. Charlton, delivered before the members of the Union Society on their seventy-third anniversary AD 1823* (Savannah, 1860), 12 (paginated separately in Union Society Mins.).

55. Howell Cobb was jailed on April 18, 1815. Savannah Jail Register, 1809–1815, GHS.

56. Cases of James Fountain, William Cahill, William Simpson, William Mahew, and John Gilbert. Savannah City Council Minutes, November 2, 1818; October 18, 1819 [2]; March 10, 1823; and May 20, 1830. William Thompson was fined for retailing liquor without a licence, City Council Minutes, March 3, 1836. SFSS Mins., Annual Report 1824.

57. Timothy J. Lockley, "Trading Encounters between Non-Elite Whites and African Americans in Savannah, 1790–1860," *Journal of Southern History* 66 (2000): 25–48. More than a thousand residents were jailed between January 1860 and December 1862. City of Savannah, Jail Register, 1855–62, GHS.

58. Betty Wood, "For Their Satisfaction or Redress": African Americans and Church Discipline in the Early South," in *The Devil's Lane: Sex and Race in the Early South*, ed. Catherine Clinton and Michele Gillespie (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 109–23; and Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Lowcountry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 178–95. See also Jean E. Friedman, *The Enclosed Garden: Women and Community in the Evangelical South, 1830–1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 78; Janet Cornelius, "Slave Marriages in a Georgia Congregation," in *Class, Conflict, and Consensus: Antebellum Southern Community Studies*, ed. Orville Vernon Burton and Robert C. McMath (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985), 128; and Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 183–206.

59. *Savannah Republican*, November 18, 1856.
60. Howell Cobb, *A Scriptural Examination of the Institution of Slavery in the United States; with its Objects and Purposes* (Perry, Ga.: for the author, 1856), 8, 11.
61. Union Society Mins., 162–64. A list of those from Savannah who served with the Confederate forces can be found in F. D. Lee and J. L. Agnew, *Historical Record of the City of Savannah* (Savannah: J. H. Estill, 1868), 119–28.
62. *Address of the Hon. Thomas U. P. Charlton*, 12.
63. [Savannah] *Daily Morning News*, May 11, 1854.
64. SFSS Mins., November 1840; November 28, 1848.
65. SFSS Mins., May 11, 1825; and Address of Howell Cobb, 16.
66. *Savannah Morning News*, April 27, 1860. Kern was a thirty-three-year-old laborer, according to the 1860 census.

Chapter 10. Responsive Justices

1. Somerset County Court (Judicial Record), MSA C1774-31:216, hereafter Somerset Judicials. All manuscript sources are located at the Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, Maryland.
2. On Talbot, see Jean B. Russo, *Free Workers in a Plantation Economy: Talbot County, Maryland, 1690–1759* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1989), esp. pt. 1; and Paul G. E. Clemens, *The Atlantic Economy and Colonial Maryland's Eastern Shore: From Tobacco to Grain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980). On Somerset, see J. Elliott Russo, "The Interest of the County: Population, Economy, and Society in Eighteenth-Century Somerset County, Maryland" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1999); and Lois Green Carr, "Diversification in the Colonial Chesapeake: Somerset County, Maryland, in Comparative Perspective," in *Colonial Chesapeake Society*, ed. Lois Green Carr et al. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1988), 342–88.
3. In Virginia, courts shared responsibility for children's welfare with parish vestries, but because the Church of England did not become Maryland's established church until sixty years after settlement, the vestry's secular responsibilities devolved to the county court early in the seventeenth century. In 1692 the establishment act provided for elected vestries in each parish but did not grant them the same range of authority as exercised by their Virginia counterparts. In this, as in several other areas, the treatment of orphans in Maryland differs markedly from the practice in Virginia, as described by Holly Brewer in chapter 12 of this volume. On the powers of the Virginia's vestries, see William H. Seiler, "The Anglican Church: A Basic Institution of Local Government in Colonial Virginia," in *Town and Country: Essays on the Structure of Local Government in the American Colonies*, ed. Bruce C. Daniels (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1978), 148, 150. On the role of Maryland vestries, see Lois Green Carr, "The Foundations of Social Order: Local Government in Colonial Maryland," in *Town and Country*, ed. Daniels, 73, 93.
4. For two useful introductions into the larger literature on patriarchy in early America, see Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers and Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), esp. ch. 2; and Kathleen M. Brown, *Nasty Wenches, Good Wives, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1996). Note that Mary Beth Norton explicitly avoids the use of "patriarch" and its variants... in the interest of achieving greater precision and adhering to terminology appropriate to the period. Norton, *Founding Mothers*, 413n5.
5. Carr, "Foundations of Social Order," 85.
6. See, in particular, Bruce C. Daniels, "Introduction," in *Town and Country*, ed. Daniels, 7–10; as well as other essays in the same volume.
7. Lois Green Carr, "The Development of the Maryland Orphans' Court, 1654–1715," in *Law, Society, and Politics in Early Maryland*, ed. Aubrey C. Land et al. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 41–62; Lorena S. Walsh, "Community Networks in the Early Chesapeake," in *Colonial Chesapeake Society*, ed. Carr et al., 70–115, 200–241; and Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680–1800* (Chapel

Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1986), 386–87.

8. Talbot County judicial records begin in 1662 but have significant gaps, while the Somerset judicial records begin in 1665, with complete coverage after 1687; all counts of children and their status thus represent lower bounds.

9. It is assumed that not all women who bore children out of wedlock were charged with a criminal offense. Court records document cases of women punished for bastardy whose children died prior to prosecution; we have not included these cases in the minimum numbers of bastard children at risk for placement by the court. We have used annual averages of extant cases as proxies for missing court proceedings to estimate the total number of bastardy cases. Again, Maryland practice contrasts sharply with Virginia, where "courts left few illegitimate children with their mothers or even with their fathers," according to Brewer's essay in chapter 12 of this volume.

10. Somerset Judicials, C1774-8:98 and C1774-35:98–99.

11. Talbot County Judgments, C:1875-23:96, hereafter Talbot Judgments. Siblings frequently had different masters, particularly if the family was a large one, as few households had the resources to absorb several extra members.

12. Talbot Judgments, C1875-21:26.

13. Somerset Judicials, C1774-17:108; Talbot Judgments, C1875-22:228; and Somerset Judicials, C1774-18:269.

14. Talbot Judgments, C1875-20:60.

15. Somerset Judicials, C1774-16:52.

16. Carr, "Orphans' Court," 41.

17. "An Act for the Preservacon of Orphans Estates," William Hand Browne, ed., *Archives of Maryland* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1883), vol. 1, *Proceedings and Acts of the General Assembly January 1637/8-September 1664*, 494.

18. Many children were bound at quite young ages, indicating that householders were willing to gamble on caring for very young children in the hope of eventual benefit from their labor, even when the potential workers were white girls whose service would be limited to domestic help. Thus foster care was generally a temporary expedient until a child could be matched with a master, rather than a means of providing care for children too young to earn their keep.

19. Talbot Judgments, AB 8, 1696–1698, C1875-9:466 and 467.

20. "An Act for the better Administration of Justice in Probate of Wills granting Administrations recovery of Legacies and securing filial Portions," William Hand Browne, ed., *Archives of Maryland* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1894), vol. 13, *Proceedings and Acts of the General Assembly, April 1684-June 1692*, 433.

21. Talbot Judgments, C1875-20:195; and Somerset Judicials, C1774-17:107.

22. Browne, *Archives of Maryland*, 1:494.

23. Talbot Judgments, C1875-19:n.p., 3/1705 court.

24. Neither Talbot nor Somerset contained any settlement larger than a small village during the colonial period. For a different pattern of apprenticeship, one influenced by the presence of a flourishing town, see Christine M. Daniels, "Alternative Workers in a Slave Economy, Kent County, Maryland, 1675–1810" (Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1990), esp. chs. 2, 6, and 8.

25. Orphans who did not inherit real property nonetheless frequently received a share of their father's personalty, including livestock.

26. Somerset Judicials, C1774-30:186.

27. The group of mixed-race children bound by the Somerset court after 1740 includes seventeen boys and nine girls; four boys and one girl were bound without provisions for reading.

28. The reasons for the noticeable difference between the two counties in the treatment of mixed-race children remain unclear. Although we expected that the size of Somerset's oft-cited free black and mulatto population might be a factor, the 1755 census records a larger nonwhite free population in Talbot (71 adults) than in Somerset (48 adults). We therefore hypothesize that the different economic structure of the two counties played a more important role, with Somerset's regional and West Indian trade creating a demand for rudimentary skills that was absent