CHAPTER 2

Designing Women: Measuring Acquisition and Access at the Hermitage Plantation

JILLIAN E. GALLE

Gracy Bradley and Elizabeth Keckley led strangely parallel lives. Both were born in Virginia in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Their skills as seamstresses took them to the White House—Gracy Bradley as the seamstress for Andrew Jackson and his family and Elizabeth Keckley as the dressmaker for Mary Todd Lincoln. Both were African American, and both used their talents to benefit themselves, their families, and their communities. There was, however, one significant difference between these two women: Gracy Bradley was a slave; Elizabeth Keckley was free.

Keckley's success story is an important starting point for this narrative about Gracy Bradley and her role as the seamstress at Andrew Jackson's plantation, the Hermitage, located outside of Nashville, Tennessee. Keckley, who spent thirty years as a slave, sewed her way to freedom. Born in Virginia, and moved by her owner to North Carolina and then Missouri, Keckley took in sewing in order to keep "bread in the mouths of seventeen persons" (Keckley 1868:45). Word of her expertise spread throughout St. Louis society, and her skills became so desirable that Keckley's female patrons purchased her freedom in 1855 for $1,200. When Keckley fully repaid this loan in 1860, she headed North, supporting herself and her son by teaching classes in dress cutting and fitting. Upon her arrival in Washington, she became the modiste for the wife of Jefferson Davis, then U.S. senator and soon-to-be president of the Confederacy. When she refused to return South with the Davises at the onset of the Civil War, Keckley was selected as the White House seamstress for Mary Todd Lincoln. She continued as Lincoln's supporter and confidant after her husband's assassination, and she went on to found the Black Contraband Relief Association in Washington, D.C. (Keckley 1868).

Keckley's story is an outlier on the historical landscape. Although few enslaved seamstresses earned their freedom with their needles, skilled seamstress work gave slaves opportunities in both the free and enslaved worlds. Enslaved seamstresses occupied a broader world than most slaves and their skills may have resulted in material and social benefits not afforded to the rest of the enslaved community. Their proximity and value to their owners most likely provided some seamstresses and their families with better quality food, clothing, housing, and other material objects. Their skills also gave them direct access to expensive fabrics and adornment items. Access to these objects, as well as knowledge of current fashions and textile and dressmaking techniques, may have helped seamstresses establish economic and social connections with slaves living in different quartering areas throughout the plantation community.

The archaeological record at the Hermitage is uniquely suited to test the hypothesis that an enslaved seamstress had access to material goods and knowledge not available to the majority of the slave community. Since the 1970s archaeologists have uncovered the extensive plantation landscape at the Hermitage (McKee 1992, 1995; McKee et. al. 1994; Russell 1997; Smith 1976; Thomas 1995, 1998). Archaeological data from three contemporaneous yet spatially separate quartering areas, the Mansion Backyard, the First Hermitage, and the Field Quarter, provide most of what is known about the more than 140 slaves living at the Hermitage by 1850 (Figure 2.1). To date, over thirteen dwelling units from these three slave quartering areas have been either archaeologically tested or fully excavated. These sites have generated hundreds of thousands of artifacts from a variety of contexts, providing archaeologists, historians, and the public with a rich and complex picture of plantation life at the Hermitage. As with most comparative archaeological work, however, sample size differences and a range of excavation strategies can impede useful comparsons between sites, especially when trying to understand differences in nonceramic assemblages. This has resulted in the assumption that various nonceramic artifact types, such as toys, buttons, beads, buckles, coins, and firearms, were evenly distributed across the plantation (Russell 1997; Thomas 1998).[1]

The proposed expectation for this study, however, is that quantitative measures of assemblage content should indicate that the enslaved seamstress had access to greater amounts of nonprovisioned objects than other enslaved individuals. The method of acquisition, such as purchase or special provisioning, in the form of gifts and hand-me-downs not accessible to every slave, cannot be determined. However, I propose that higher discard rates of non-

provisioned items indicates a slave who received more gifts, and who had the means and opportunities to purchase or barter for items not usually provided by an owner.

Data from four slave-dwelling sites are used for this study. I first locate the seamstress' residence using a measure of artifact abundance known here as the Abundance Index (AI) (Galle and Neiman 2003; Neiman et. al. 2000; Ugan and Bright 2001). In order to measure variation in access and acquisition, discard rates of objects that would not necessarily have been provided by Jackson, such as adornment items, toys, musical instruments, and tobacco pipes, are then calculated using AI. These methods provide an accurate measure of assemblage variation for sites with different sample sizes and for difficult-to-quantify artifacts such as non-provisioned items.

The Hermitage

When Andrew Jackson first moved to the Hermitage property in 1804, he owned 9 taxable slaves. By 1820 that number had quadrupled to 44 slaves, and within five years that number had doubled to 85 taxable slaves. The enslaved population at the Hermitage continued to grow through natural increase and the occasional purchase until Jackson's death in 1845. Census records from 1850 indicate that 137 enslaved individuals lived at the Hermitage (Thomas 1995:34–39). These enslaved Africans maintained more than one thousand acres of cotton fields, raised Jackson's prizewinning thoroughbred horses, cultivated secondary crops of wheat and corn, labored in the peach and apples orchards, and tended the vegetable and flower gardens. At certain times of the year the cotton gin and cotton press required constant attention. An 1835 letter from one of Jackson's overseers indicates that the cotton cloth woven at the Hermitage was used to make clothing for slaves: "We have all of our winter cloth for the negroes done but two pieces to weave, we will soon be done with that Job. Our shoes I have not yet begun. I have been trying to get the leather for three weeks and have not yet got it" (Bassett 1937:361). Everything from cloth to leather was cut and assembled at the Hermitage to create the attire provisioned to the enslaved community.

Two inventories of the property offer some of the only evidence of the various occupations held by Hermitage slaves. In both the 1829 and 1846 inventories, four women, Gincy, Creasy, Big Sally, and Eliza, were listed as weavers.

One enslaved man, Ben, worked the cotton gin (Thomas 1995:145–155). Although the 1829 inventory does not list a seamstress, the 1846 inventory does identify Gracy Bradley in such a role. Check receipts from Jackson to a Mr. Hebbs of Virginia mark the purchase of Gracy Bradley, her mother, two sisters, and her brother in January and February 1833.[2] Gracy, who was around fifteen years old at the time, and her sister Louisa were slaves at the White House for several years while her mother, sister Rachel, and brother were sent to the Hermitage. Gracy and Louisa were probably moved to the Hermitage at the end of Jackson's presidential term in 1836. Within a year of her arrival at the Hermitage, she married one of the most prominent enslaved men on the plantation, Alfred Jackson, Andrew Jackson's wagoner. Gracy retained her surname and resided at the Hermitage until her death in 1882.

Gracy was certainly not the only enslaved person who sewed at the Hermitage. However, she was probably the only one trained in specialized clothing construction and design. Jackson's decision to purchase her in Washington as the seamstress for those in the White House suggests the importance she held for the Jackson family. Unfortunately, few primary documents or family papers survive regarding slavery at the Hermitage. Written sources do not indicate, for example, the extent of Gracy's duties or where she lived on the plantation. Only one garment possibly made by Gracy, a man's shirt, survives. Archaeology is therefore one of the main ways of understanding Gracy's role on the plantation.

The Sites

The data used in this study are taken from four slave-dwelling sites located in spatially separate quartering areas. Cabin 3 is one of four twenty-by-forty-foot double-pen brick dwellings located at the Field Quarter, an area one-third mile north of the Hermitage mansion (see Figure 2.1). As many as eighty enslaved individuals lived at the Field Quarter between the 1820s and the 1850s. Separated from the mansion and surrounding plantation dependencies, the Field Quarter likely housed field slaves rather than domestic or skilled slaves. This study uses data from excavations at Cabin 3 West, the western twenty-by-twenty-foot unit of Cabin 3.[3]

The South Cabin is located 540 feet northeast of the mansion in the area known as the First Hermitage. Like Cabin 3, the South Cabin was a twenty-by-forty-foot brick duplex occupied between the early 1820s and the late 1850s.

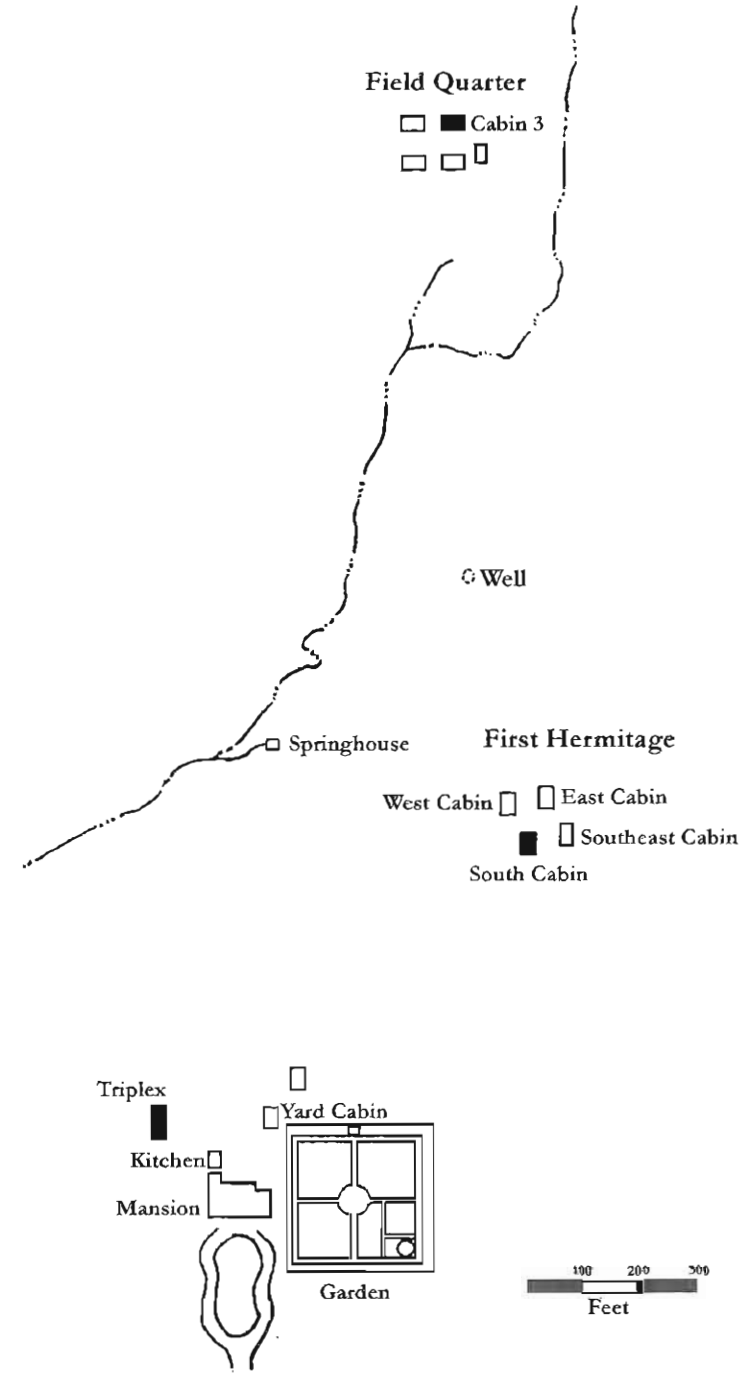

FIG. 2.1. Hermitage Plantation (after Thomas 1995:41).

At least three other log structures, known as the East Cabin, the West Cabin, and the Southeast Cabin, stood at the First Hermitage. Built around 1804, these three structures housed the Jackson family and at least two families of slaves prior to the completion of the brick Hermitage mansion in 1821. These buildings were completely converted into slave houses shortly after the Jacksons moved into their new home (Smith 1976:114–119). Due to its proximity to the agricultural fields, gardens, and barns, a mixture of skilled and field slaves, and perhaps some domestic slaves whose responsibilities centered on the stables or the gardens, probably occupied the South Cabin (Thomas 1995:62–63).

The Triplex, located behind the Hermitage mansion just to the northwest of the detached kitchen, is a three-unit, twenty-by-sixty-foot brick dwelling. It is a variant of the brick two-unit slave dwellings that were constructed across the property in the early 1820s. Located behind the kitchen and smoke house, and across the yard from at least one other slave dwelling, the Triplex was part of a busy and dynamic mansion backyard that was home to as many as forty enslaved African Americans (see Figure 2.1). A person standing on the back porch of the Hermitage mansion could have observed the comings-and-goings of slaves and called any slave in the area by ringing call bells attached to the exterior of the building. In all likelihood, one or more members of each family living in these dwellings was required to work in the mansion or the surrounding dependencies.

Data from the Triplex North and Triplex Middle are used in this study. The Triplex North is the northern twenty-by-twenty-foot dwelling unit, and Triplex Middle is the central twenty-by-twenty-foot dwelling unit in the Triplex structure. A communicating interior door between the two units was unlikely, although there are no specific architectural data to confirm this. For this study, the Triplex North and Triplex Middle are analyzed as separate dwelling units containing different households. The Triplex was occupied until the mid-1850s, at which time Andrew Jackson Jr. and his family left the plantation amid financial difficulties (McKee et. al. 1994:19).

The Abundance Index: Measuring Consumption Through Discard Rates

One goal of this study is to measure variation in an individual's or household's ability to acquire goods through exchange, purchase or other mode of acquisition independent of slave owner provisioning. The ability to acquire goods

over and above those items provided by the owner should be reflected in use rates and discard rates. For example, an individual or household that acquired more tobacco pipes should, theoretically, discard more pipes. A comparison of discard rates at Cabin 3 West, the South Cabin, the Triplex Middle, and the Triplex North is essential to testing the hypothesis that the enslaved seamstress had greater access to non-provisioned items than other Hermitage slaves.

How can we quantify non-provisioned items in the archaeological record in a manner that captures variation in discard rates and that pinpoints households that had more access to goods through their own agency and various modes of acquisition? Unfortunately, measuring and comparing discard rates using archaeological data is a difficult task. Currently many historical archaeologists use relative frequencies or percentages to measure assemblage variation among sites. Relative frequencies as measures of discard rates are problematic for inter-site comparisons. This is because relative frequencies are based on the assumption that the discard rate of the artifact class in the numerator is independent of the discard rates for all the other artifact classes that make up the denominator and that create the total sample size. A positive correlation between the discard rates of the numerator artifact class and any other artifact class that contributes to the total sample size in the denominator would attenuate variation in percentages between sites (Neiman et. al. 2000: 47).

In this study it would not be unexpected to find correlations between discard rates for non-provisioned classes of artifacts. Enslaved individuals or households with greater access to one class of non-provisioned items were likely to have greater access to other classes of non-provisioned goods. For example, a household that had access to decorative buckles and buttons might also have more access to beads. If relative frequencies are used to measure variation in buckles and buttons, variation among sites in the percentage of these artifact classes will be muted. It is important to remove beads from the denominator so that its correlation with buckles and buttons will not mask variation in the underlying discard rate values.

The Abundance Index works by choosing a single artifact class as the denominator value. By reducing the denominator to a single artifact class, one only has to be concerned with variation influenced by the correlation between two artifact classes, not variation within scores of artifact classes. It is important to select a denominator artifact class whose discard rate is either constant across assemblages or whose discard rate across assemblages varies in predictable ways.

TABLE 2.1
Total Ceramics

Artifact Description	*South Cabin*	*Cabin 3 West*	*Triplex Middle*	*Triplex North*	*Total*
Ceramic	3,758	2,936	1,220	2,424	10,388

Use of an artifact class with a relatively constant discard rate will result in a higher correlation between *AI* and discard rates than between percentages and discard rates.

Ceramics were chosen as the denominator artifact in this study for two reasons. First, most slave owners provided some ceramics, food, a small quantity of clothing, and bedding on a regular basis, although each owner distributed these goods at different intervals. Ceramics are one of the consistently and regularly provisioned items that remain in the archaeological record. Second, documents also tell us that owners provided slaves with the majority of their ceramics (Otto 1984; Rawick 1972). This was the case at the Hermitage (Thomas 1995: 66; Thomas 1998). Although some slaves most likely supplemented their ceramic rations with pieces acquired through purchase or exchange, ceramics were most likely provided by Jackson at a constant rate. Relatively constant provisioning of ceramics would result in a relatively constant discard rate, therefore making ceramics one of the more reliable artifact classes against which to measure access to goods independent of provisioning.

For this study the Abundance Index is estimated as:

$$AI = \frac{(\text{Artifact Group 1})}{(\text{Artifact Group 1}) + (\text{Artifact Group 2})}$$

where Group 1 is the artifact group whose variation we are interested in measuring and Group 2 is the artifact group against which abundance variation is measured. For this study, Artifact Group 1 is the sum of a chosen group of generally non-provisioned artifacts, such as adornment items. *Artifact Group 2* is the total sum of ceramics for each site. The ceramic total for each site provides a constant with which to compare these assemblages (Table 2.1).

This analysis begins with the calculation of a Sewing Equipment Index in order to gauge use frequencies and discard rates of sewing equipment at these four sites. The sewing equipment category consists of straight pins, scissors,

TABLE 2.2
Sewing Equipment Group Summary

Artifact Description	*South Cabin*	*Cabin 3 West*	*Triplex Middle*	*Triplex North*	*Total*
Awl/Drizzler			1		1
Crochet hook			1		1
Eye, clothing	7	4	2	10	23
Hook, clothing	14	12	19	7	52
Ivory needle case			1		1
Knitting needle guard			3		3
Lace needle			1		1
Needle		4	1		5
Scissors	1	3	1		5
Straight pin	45	12	323	60	440
Tambour hook			1		1
Thimble	5	1	2		8
Total	72	36	356	77	541

thimbles, needles, and miscellaneous bone needleworking implements (Table 2.2). Sewing equipment may have been provisioned to those slaves whose occupation depended on such tools. Sewing equipment would not have been provided to all slaves as part of an owner's standard allotment.

Table 2.2 reveals the variability in the numbers of types of sewing equipment recovered at each site. The most abundant sewing tools were straight pins, and all four sites contained them. Thimbles and scissors were the second and third most common pieces of sewing equipment, with fragments of both types found at Cabin 3 West, the South Cabin, and the Triplex Middle. The Triplex Middle contained a unique group of sewing tools, including a brass thimble stamped with the words "Tho Absent Ever dear," an ivory needle case, two mother-of-pearl knitting needle guards, and four specialized needlework implements: a tambour hook, a lace bobbin, an awl or drizzler, and a crochet hook. When these raw counts are put into the AI equation, the results indicate that residents at the Triplex Middle used and discarded ten times the number of sewing tools than those at Cabin 3 West, the South Cabin, and the Triplex North. The Sewing Equipment Index was calculated using 95 percent confidence limits (Figure 2.2).

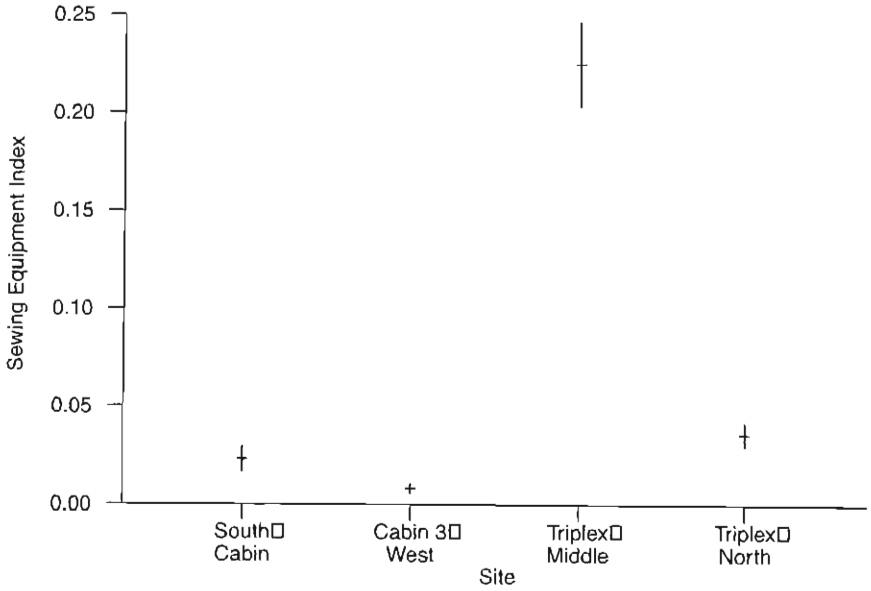

FIG. 2.2. Sewing equipment index values with exact 95 percent confidence limits.

In contrast, residents at Cabin 3 West, the South Cabin, and the Triplex North discarded relatively few sewing items. The small number of straight pins, thimbles, and scissors most likely indicate that clothing repair and small-scale clothing production occurred at these sites. These artifacts not only demonstrate that slaves stretched their limited clothing supply as far as possible, but that they may have also had some degree of autonomy in respect to the creation and embellishment of garments to supplement their rations. The large quantity of basic sewing equipment, the unique presence of specialized needleworking tools, and the building's proximity to the mansion suggest that the Triplex Middle served as the center of highly skilled, and possibly large-scale, sewing activities at the Hermitage. It is likely that this dwelling unit was the residence of Gracy Bradley and her family or someone like her.

The Material Culture of Sewing and Needlework

The sewing toolkit found at the Triplex Middle represents a range of skills possessed by both enslaved and free seamstresses. As the use of lace and embroidered fabrics on garments and in home decor rose in popularity during the last

quarter of the eighteenth century, greater value was placed on a woman's needlework skills (Baumgarten 2003). For elite and aspiring elite women, decorative needlework was an important mode of personal expression as well as social competition. Fine needlework was time consuming, however, and many women had difficulty producing the quantity of lace and embroidered fabric required to keep their family fashionable. Not surprisingly, the demand for skilled enslaved seamstresses rose throughout the early nineteenth century due partly to these changing fashions (Proctor 1990; Rogers 1983).

The mass production of sewing implements such as straight pins, thimbles, and bone needlework tools during the second quarter of the nineteenth century helped make it economically feasible to provide an enslaved seamstress with the tools she needed. Prior to the 1830s, for example, most sewing equipment was only sold in prohibitively expensive sewing tables or kits imported from China or Europe (Figure 2.3). The industrial revolution brought changes that directly affected the cost and availability of bone, ivory, and metal sewing equipment. In 1824 Lemuel Wright invented a straight pin machine that produced solid, machine-headed pins. These inexpensive and readily available straight pins replaced costly hand-headed pins. Similarly, the introduction of stamped brass thimbles in the 1820s provided a less costly alternative to imported silver, gold, and mother-of-pearl thimbles (Rogers 1983:95). By the mid-1830s, American manufacturers were also producing bone tools that copied expensive ivory needlework tools produced in east Asia and Europe (16–17).

The ivory needle case and two mother-of-pearl knitting needle guards found at the Triplex Middle are representative of imported needleworking tools. The mother-of-pearl knitting needle guards, usually purchased in pairs connected by either a ribbon or chain, became popular in the late 1840s (Figure 2.4). Placed on the end of knitting needles to keep the needle set together, they also prevented stitches from sliding off works in progress. Needle guards ranged in size from one-half inch to two inches in length and could easily accommodate thin, nineteenth-century knitting needles, which were often referred to as "pin[s], wire[s], or prick[s]" (Proctor 1990:112; Rogers 1983:201).

The four bone implements found at the Triplex Middle point to the production of detailed textiles such lace, tambour work, embroidery, and whitework. Bone and ivory tambour hook handles and lace bobbins were often intricately lathed. The recovered handle of a possible tambour hook would have been fitted with a metal hook. The neck of the lace bobbin was broken off, perhaps during use, and the broken edge was filed flat (Figure 2.5).

FIG. 2.3. This sewing table was purchased for $50 in 1835 from the Philadelphia merchants, Barry and Kirkbaum. It was a gift from Andrew Jackson to his daughter-in-law, Sarah Yorke Jackson. Photograph courtesy Jean Fuller Guy and The Hermitage, Home of President Andrew Jackson.

The other two bone tools found at the Triplex were handcrafted rather than mass produced, and they may have been worked or modified at the Hermitage. In addition to crochet work, the flat bone crochet hook (Figure 2.5) may have also been used for pulling thread through eyelets or other openwork such as lace or white-work (Baumgarten, personal communication; Rogers 1983). A bone awl

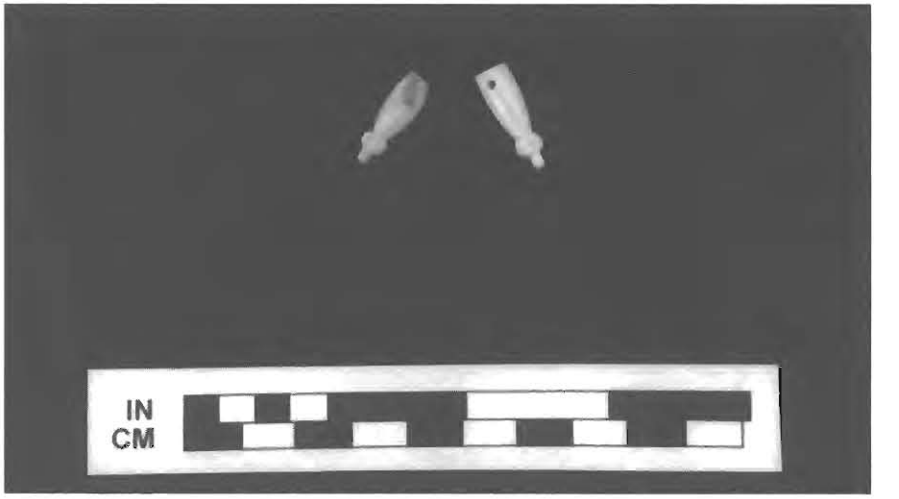

FIG. 2.4. Mother-of-Pearl knitting needle guards from the Triplex Middle. Photograph by Larry McKee, by permission of the Archaeology Department, The Ladies Hermitage Association.

or stiletto was probably reshaped from a larger piece of bone (Figure 2.5). Its small, thin point may have been used in the creation of cutwork or for pushing thread through white work (Rogers 1983:207). It is also possible that the awl was used as a drizzler. Drizzlers were specialized tools used to draw precious silver and gold thread from worn cloth.

These tools excavated from the Triplex Middle suggest that a wide range of detailed needlework occurred within the cabin. The presence of the lace bobbin, tambour hook, and knitting needle guards indicate that a Hermitage seamstress, most likely Gracy, knew sewing techniques that few slaves at the Hermitage possessed. High-style nineteenth-century clothing included pleats, tucks, and seams that required several pins during the process of construction. The discovery of 347 straight pins suggests that the residents of the Triplex Middle were engaged in the production of the elaborate dress required by the Jacksons (Figure 2.6). The quantity of straight pins may also signal that this quarter, and perhaps the entire Triplex structure, served as a center for the production of all slave clothing at the Hermitage. The process of making clothing for 130 slaves would have required a large number of pins. The location of the Triplex Middle directly behind the mansion made it easily accessible to Rachel Jackson, Jackson's wife, and Sarah Yorke Jackson, Jackson's

FIG. 2.5. Bone and ivory needlework tools from the Triplex Middle. *From top to bottom*: Awl/Drizzler, Needle Case, Tambour Hook Handle, Crochet Hook, Lace Bobbin. Photograph by Larry McKee, by permission of the Archaeology Department, The Ladies Hermitage Association.

daughter-in-law, who likely supervised, and perhaps participated in, plantationwide sewing activities.[4]

A seamstress' specialized skills benefited the enslaved plantation community as well. The standard practice among planters was to distribute clothing twice a year, usually an allotment of two suits of a lightweight cloth such as osnaburg and two suits of heavy cloth such as wool (Breeden 1980; Joyner 1991:56). There were great discrepancies, however, in accounts of what a suit of clothing comprised and whether accessories, such as shoes and shawls, were included with the biannual distribution (Breeden 1980; Joyner 1991; Mellon 1988; Perdue et al. 1976; Rawick 1972). To save time and fabric, shapeless patterns that could be adapted to a multitude of body sizes were cut from coarse wool and osnaburg (Durand 1977:12–17; Fry 1990; Tandberg 1980:90–91).

FIG. 2.6. A sample of straight pins from the Triplex Middle. Photograph by Larry McKee, by permission of the Archaeology Department, The Ladies Hermitage Association.

As recipients of the coarse, misshapen clothing, enslaved individuals were aware of the statements owners made by providing uncomfortable and unflattering apparel.

Masters' accounts and former-slave interviews demonstrate that clothing was not only used to mark differences between free and enslaved groups, but also to signal within an enslaved population differential access to goods and possibly services. Many former slaves spoke of clothing items they had made, while others described their ability to earn money to purchase "dress-up" clothing (Baumgarten 1988, 1991; Fox-Genovese 1988; Mellon 1988; Perdue et al. 1976:316; Rawick 1972). With a distinctive dress, headscarf, or waistcoat, an enslaved individual could display his or her ability to supplement allotments from owners. Several factors contributed to a slave's ability to procure clothes beyond what was provided in the biannual allotment: an individual's

proximity to the plantation household; his or her use of informal plantation economies; and their personal skills at sewing and design innovation.

Slaves who labored in the house or surrounding dependencies as maids, cooks, gardeners, or stable hands were often dressed in uniforms or hand-me-downs provided by their owners. Hand-me-down clothing may have also found its way to fieldworkers and more isolated quarters through direct provisioning or trade within the enslaved community. Enslaved women who did not receive hand-me-downs often altered plain osnaburg by weaving different colors into the fabric, or by stitching on more fashionable buttons and beads (Fry 1990; Hunt 1996; White 1991). Women and men adapted clothing to fit their own needs, decorating and altering as they could (Hunt 1996:228).

In addition to hand-me-downs and personal innovation, enslaved men and women purchased fabric, ribbons, and buttons (Heath 1997, 1999, this volume; Smart-Martin 1991, 1996). Many plantations had organized internal economies through which slaves earned and spent money. Some planters gave money to their slaves in exchange for crops raised in their gardens or for the completion of specialized or unsavory tasks (Breeden 1980:257–275; Heath this volume; Mellon 1988:56). An Alabama planter wrote in 1852: "Each of the men has an acre of ground to cultivate his own, and I reward the one that gathers the largest and best crop. With the proceeds of their crop they purchase their Sunday clothing" (Breeden 1980:271–272). In addition, slaves made goods or traded labor for money or store credit (Heath, this volume). Groups of enslaved men and women may have participated together in the production of knitted crafts and quilts (Fry 1990; MacDonald 1988:23–25). Enslaved individuals also participated in informal exchanges with neighboring plantations.

Both the free and enslaved communities valued a seamstress' work (Durand 1977:12–17; Fry 1990; Tandberg 1980:90–91). For the free plantation community, ownership of a skilled seamstress meant that the household had access to a woman who could produce everyday clothes, linens, and fashionable dress for the family as well as manage the production of clothing for the rest of the enslaved community. Demand for these skills was so great during the nineteenth century that planters in seach of talented seamstresses placed want ads in the newspapers (Fry 1990:22). As a result of this demand, prices for enslaved seamstresses skyrocketed at the end of the eighteenth century, with their values rivaling the prices asked for healthy, young male slaves.

Although the plantation seamstress produced clothing unobtainable by other slaves, a skilled seamstress most likely had access to a wide range of

fabrics and adornment items desired by the entire enslaved community. Experienced seamstresses were responsible for handling luxury fabrics needed for their owner's garments, and they might have exchanged fabric remnants and leftover buttons and beads for goods produced by other slaves. A skilled seamstress may have also made embroidered fabric, lace, or fashionable dresses for her own personal use. Her ability to produce or acquire ornate pieces of lace, needlework, or fabric may have been a powerful resource within a group that valued, but had little access to, high-quality, decorative clothing. If so, a seamstress may have used her work not only as a gift but also as a commodity that could be traded within an economy internal to the enslaved population at the Hermitage. For example, fine lace or a fancy vest may have been traded for goods, the services of another skilled craftsperson on the plantation, or for the ministrations of a traditional healer. Additionally, lace, embroidery, quilts, and a seamstress' design skills may have found a market outside of the plantation, thus providing cash money or a position from which to trade and barter (Benberry 1992; Fry 1990).

To test the hypothesis that an enslaved steamstress had greater access to non-provisioned items, discard rates were calculated using the abundance index for several artifact groups that were most likely acquired through purchase or special provisioning resulting from preferential access. The following artifacts groups are used for this analysis: adornment, appearance, amusement, medical, and tobacco pipes. The adornment group consists of artifacts that would have appeared on clothing (beads, buckles, buttons) or over clothing (beads, hand charms, watches, jewelry) or were worn and held in a way so as to enhance one's appearance (purses, parasols, hats, eyeglasses) (Table 2.3). The appearance group, although related to the adornment group, is made up of objects that enhanced one's physical appearance through hygiene or hairstyles (hair combs, brushes, hairpins, and toothbrushes) (Table 2.4). The amusement group contains toys such as marbles and dolls and musical instruments (Table 2.5). The medical group contains objects related to health care such as medicine vials and bottles and medical tools such as syringes (Table 2.6). The tobacco pipe group contains only tobacco pipes (Table 2.7).

Adornment Index

The widespread distribution of adornment artifacts at the Hermitage indicates the importance of decorative clothing items among the enslaved population.

TABLE 2.3
Adornment Group Summary

Artifact Description	*South Cabin*	*Cabin 3 West*	*Triplex Middle*	*Triplex North*	*Total*
Aiglet			1		1
Bead	28	19	14	18	79
Buckle	4	7	9		20
Button	197	200	287	139	823
Cane handle				1	1
Cane tip		2			2
Eyeglass parts		1	3		4
Eyelet	8	31	7		46
Fan blade				8	8
Hand charm		1			1
Jewelry				4	4
Purse		5	1		6
Rivet, shoe	1	2	6	6	15
Watch fob		2			2
Total	238	270	328	176	1,012

TABLE 2.4
Appearance Group Summary

Artifact Description	*South Cabin*	*Cabin 3 West*	*Triplex Middle*	*Triplex North*	*Total*
Hair Brush			2		2
Hair comb		5	3	1	9
Hair pin		1	1		2
Toothbrush	1		4	5	10
Total	1	6	10	6	23

TABLE 2.5
Amusement Group Summary

Artifact Description	*South Cabin*	*Cabin 3 West*	*Triplex Middle*	*Triplex North*	*Total*
Doll		21	4		25
Jaw harp	2				2
Marble	9	19	57	18	103
Music box		1			1
Probable gaming piece		2			2
Toy teapot fragment (porcelain)			2		2
Total	11	43	63	18	135

TABLE 2.6
Medical Group Summary

Artifact Description	*South Cabin*	*Cabin 3 West*	*Triplex Middle*	*Triplex North*	*Total*
Cu alloy syringe			1		1
Glass medicine vial	6	20	14	4	44
Surgical tool (possible)			1		1
Total	6	20	16	4	46

TABLE 2.7
Tobacco Pipe Group Summary

Artifact Description	*South Cabin*	*Cabin 3 West*	*Triplex Middle*	*Triplex North*	*Total*
Tobacco pipe fragment	32	43	18	27	120

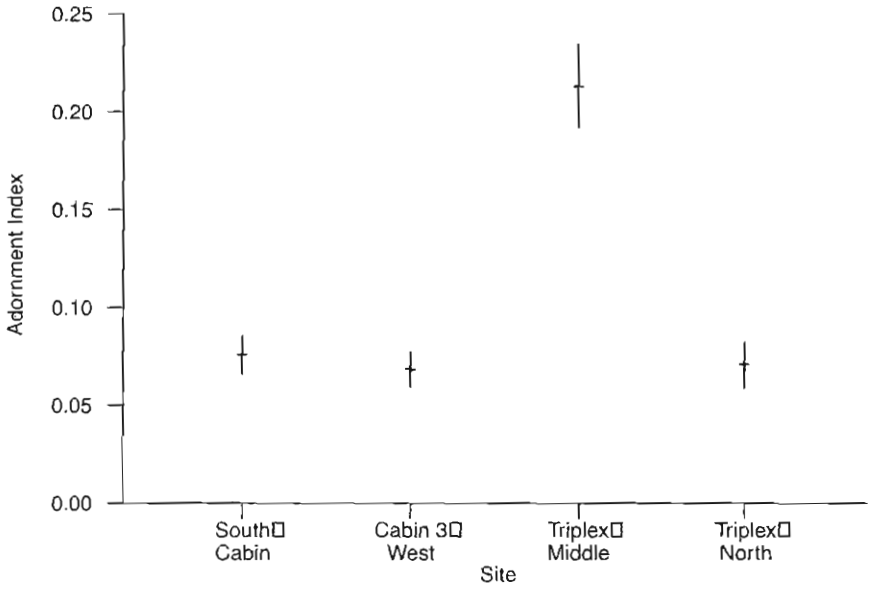

FIG. 2.7. Adornment index values with exact 95 percent confidence limits.

All three sites investigated contain adornment artifacts such as buttons, beads, clothing buckles, cane tips, fan blades, and umbrella ribs. The raw counts for each site give the impression that slaves at the Hermitage had equal access to adornment artifacts. An adornment index suggests otherwise (Figure 2.7). The adornment index indicates that residents at the Triplex Middle were discarding adornment and appearance related objects at a greater rate relative to ceramics than residents at other quarters. If the Triplex Middle was the residence and workplace of Gracy, the enslaved seamstress, then an argument might be made that the adornment index values are influenced by the large number of buttons at the Triplex Middle, objects that might also be considered part of a seamstress' toolkit. An index for adornment items minus buttons was also calculated, and the resulting values were the same (Figure 2.8). Therefore, if one were to place buttons into the sewing equipment group, the adornment without buttons index values would still suggest that Triplex Middle residents had greater access to adornment items than even the household directly adjacent to them in the Triplex North.

Buttons found at Cabin 3 West and the South Cabin were roughly similar in terms of material and style.[5] Ranging in material from metal, bone, and

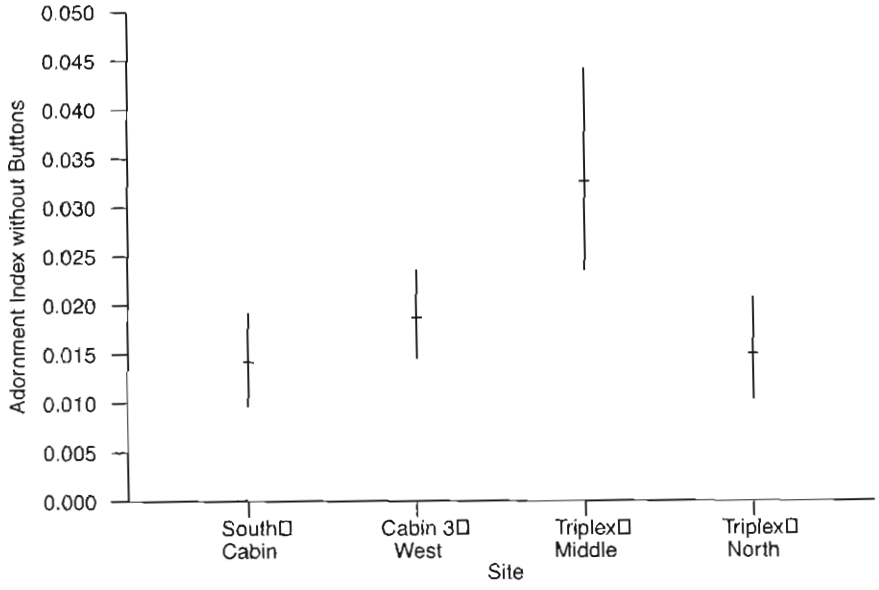

FIG. 2.8. Index values with exact 95 percent confidence limits for the adornment group with buttons removed from the analysis.

shell to porcelain and rubber, these buttons represent a variety of men's clothing, including coats, breeches, trousers, shirts, waistcoats, and underwear (L. Rogers 1992:2; 1993:1–3). Shell buttons and bone disks with single holes would have been covered with cloth, crocheted threads, or beadwork, and they are suggestive of women's clothing (L. Rogers 1993:1–3). Small, ornate buttons reflect specialized garments such as fancy vests (popular from 1830 to 1860) that were probably not distributed as part of Jackson's clothing allowance (5). Their presence may be the result of hand-me-downs, purchases, or trades.

The button assemblage from the Triplex Middle stands out from the other two sites. Bone disks with single holes and high-quality shell buttons dominate the Triplex Middle's button assemblage. These buttons probably reflect the production of individualized, high-style clothing that required buttons covered with matching fabric or decorative stitching (L. Rogers 1995:3). The number of buttons and button blanks, along with the size of the sewing assemblage, reinforces the argument that the Triplex Middle was a locus of clothing production.

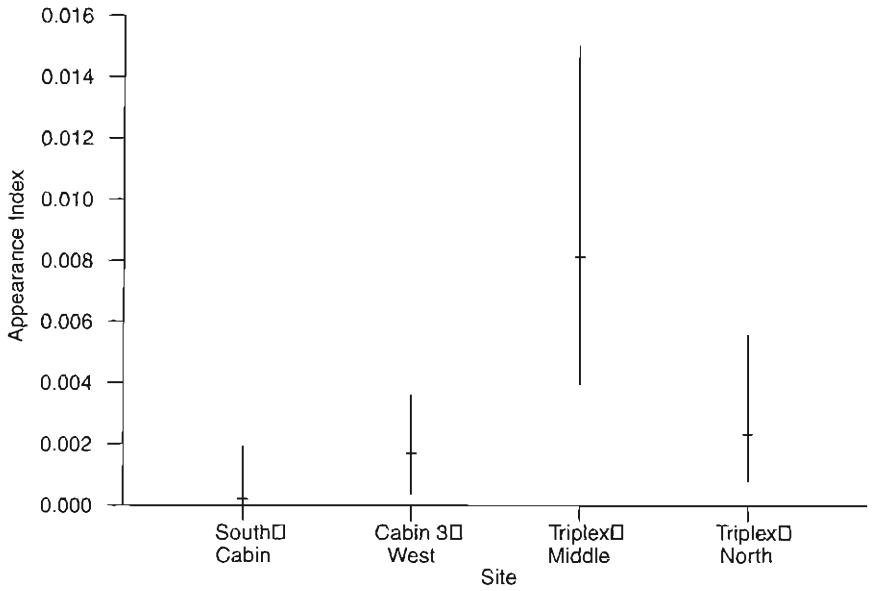

FIG. 2.9. Appearance index values with exact 95 percent confidence limits.

Appearance Index

The appearance index is similar to the adornment index (Figure 2.9). Residents at the Triplex Middle had greater access to appearance-related artifacts as well, although residents at the Triplex North may have discarded nearly as many hair combs, hair brushes, and toothbrushes.

The adornment and appearance indexes indicate that objects such as beads, buckles, hair combs, and toothbrushes were not restricted to one localized group of enslaved individuals. Not unsurprisingly, Hermitage slaves were concerned with their appearance, and they acquired adornment items not necessarily provided by Jackson's clothing distributions. The ability to procure goods not channeled through Jackson meant that either slaves had some amount of purchasing power or that there was a well-established network of trade within the enslaved community.

A skilled seamstress with access to hand-me-down clothing and remnants of cloth, and with advanced clothing design and construction skills, might have been central in the trade and distribution of adornment items. She would have been able to create stylish dresses and vests for fellow slaves not as skilled in clothing construction. Additionally, the seamstress may have saved

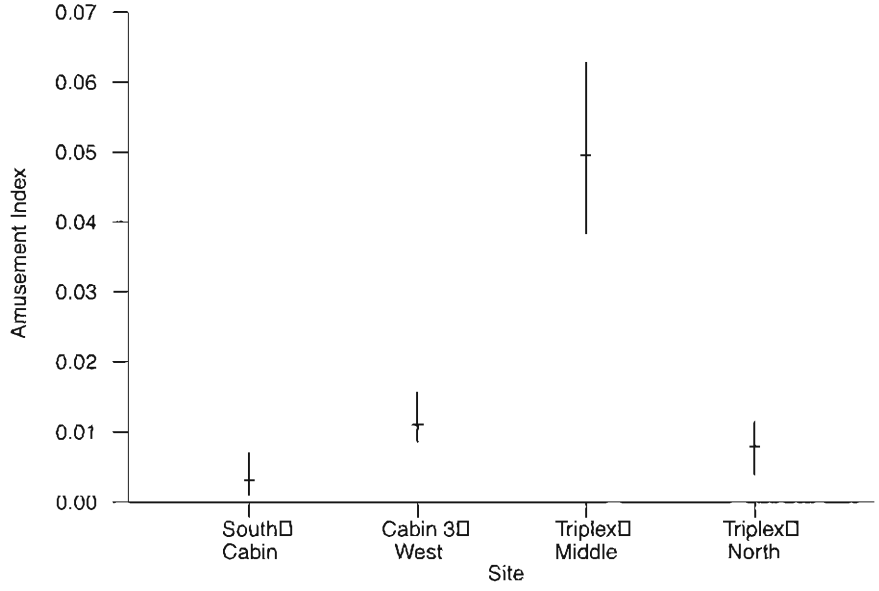

FIG. 2.10. Amusement index values with exact 95 percent confidence limits.

fabric remnants and adornment items that she then traded or passed onto other enslaved persons. Her ability to provide these desired goods may have facilitated the expansion of a seamstress's social circle. It also would have given her more social "capital" with which to trade and barter for goods and services from other slaves. These indexes show that Triplex Middle residents also had more objects than those living in the Triplex North, which suggests that the variation in discard rates may have more to do with one's social and occupational identity than one's proximity to the mansion. In addition, although Gracy may have received more from her owners, it is also possible she had more to gain from other slaves since she had objects and skills desired by the rest of the enslaved community. The amusement, medical, and tobacco pipe indexes support this theory and add complexity to the story of the Triplex Middle.

Amusement Index

The number of amusement artifacts found at the Triplex Middle may also point to the seamstress's access to materials from the mansion as well as her ability to purchase or trade for such items. The Triplex Middle contains a strikingly large

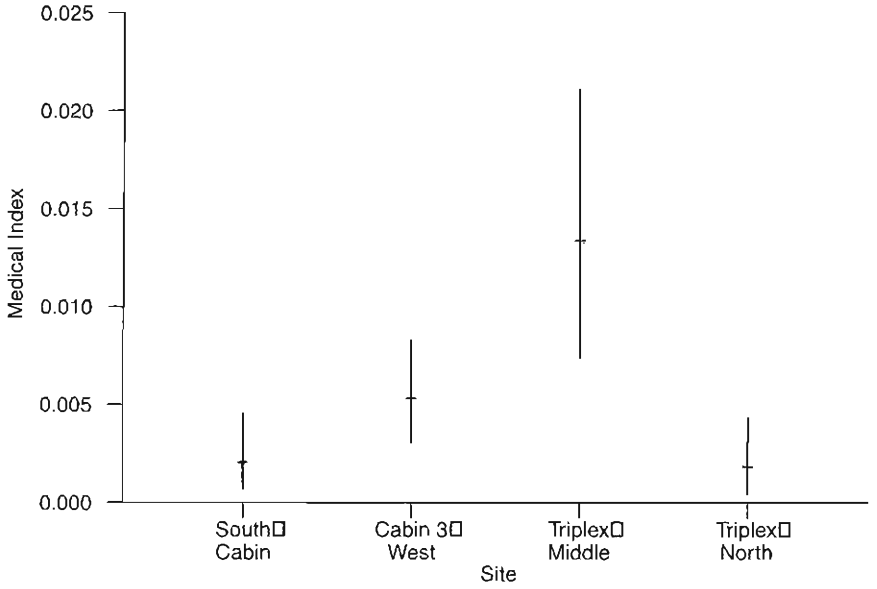

FIG. 2.11. Medical index values with exact 95 percent confidence limits.

number of marbles (Table 2.5). Four porcelain doll parts and two fragments of a toy teapot found at the Triplex Middle further point to the leisure activities of children and adults. The amusement index (Figure 2.10) shows that Triplex Middle residents were clearly using and discarding many more recreational items relative to ceramics than those living in the other three dwellings.

Medical Index

Objects related to medical care might also be used to measure a household's access to goods (Table 2.6). Once again, the Triplex Middle has the highest index value, while the Triplex North has the lowest. All four dwellings have fragments of medicine vials and medicine bottles. The Triplex Middle also contains one possible surgical tool and one intact copper syringe that was found at the bottom of the dwelling's subfloor pit (Figure 2.11).

It is possible that residents at the Triplex Middle had more medical supplies available to them. Gracy's and Alfred's value to the Jackson family may have earned them preferential health care. It may also have been the case that the Hermitage had a place on the plantation set aside for the treatment of sick slaves. Accidents occurred often on plantations, and cramped, unsanitary living

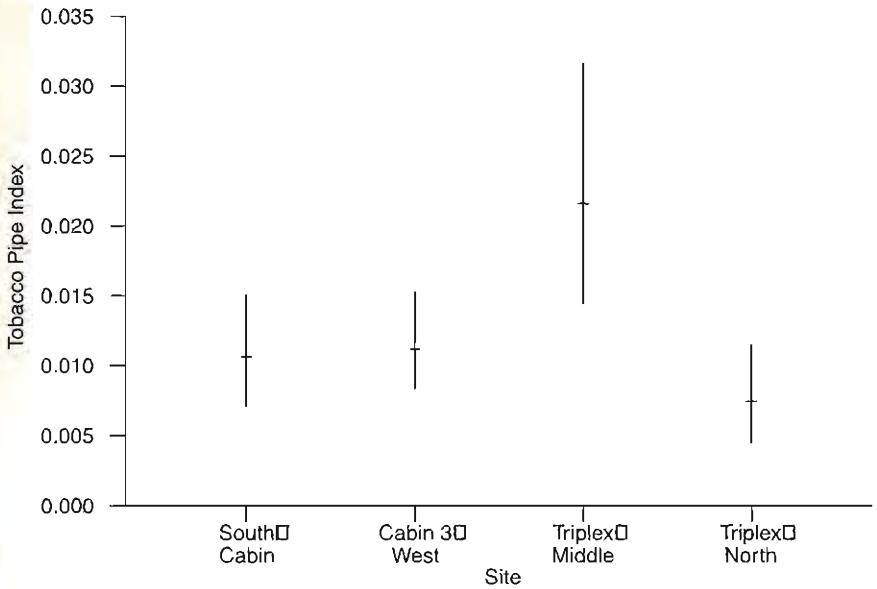

FIG. 2.12. Tobacco pipe index values with exact 95 percent confidence limits.

conditions promoted diseases such as dysentery, worms, and typhoid fever (Savitt 1988:129). When such ailments were discovered by planters, slaves were quickly treated with harsh drugs, such as quinine, leeches, and lancets, all standard medical procedures for both the free and enslaved (142). The medicine vials and possible surgical tool indicate such treatments were available to slaves at the Hermitage.

Although planters and overseers rarely named the diseases that afflicted slaves, venereal disease was a persistent problem on plantations (139). In a surprising addendum to a letter to Andrew Jackson Jr. in 1835, Mr. Hobbs, a Hermitage overseer, wrote: "Aron the Blacksmith and Tom Franklin was both taken sick yesturday, verry hot fever all night. I gave them a large dose of Calomel and Jalap this morning, they are much better tonight. Littleton is laid up with the gonerea, he got it from his wife, he of course will do nothing for two or three weeks" (Bassett 1937).

Fearing that venereal disease would disable portions of their workforce for long periods of time, planters quickly treated the afflicted. Doctors used copper alloy syringes, similar to that found in the root cellar of the Triplex Middle, to treat venereal disease during the nineteenth century. Syringes allowed the directed application of disease-fighting lotions containing sulfates

of zinc, alum, and tannin. A medical guide to prostitution first published in 1857 argued that a six-ounce syringe was the primary method by which diseases like gonorrhea were prevented and controlled (Acton 1972:85–87).

When the amusement and medical indexes are viewed in light of nineteenth-century documents, the argument that a seamstress could improve her social and economic access by way of occupational status becomes more complicated. Both planters' accounts and ex-slave interviews refer to the practice of having cooks and seamstresses watch over those unable to work in the fields, such as the young, the sick, or the elderly (Breeden 1980: 205–206, 281–288). The high amusement and medical indexes may indicate that the seamstress was looking after children while their parents were in the field or that she had the additional responsibility of caring for the sick.[6] The Triplex Middle's high tobacco pipe index also suggests that the dwelling might have been a gathering spot (Figure 2.12).

The placement of the Triplex Middle was ideal for overseeing the young and the indisposed. It is possible that the entire Triplex structure was used for these activities, although the indexes for the Triplex North are lower than the other dwellings. Currently, the child and health care roles of the seamstress at the Hermitage are speculative. However, if the Hermitage seamstress took care of the sick and the young, she may have employed them in activities related to clothing production. Masters' accounts indicate that sick women were often put to work sewing, spinning, or watching children.

Architecture and the Social Use of Space

The use of the Triplex Middle as the possible site of clothing production, childcare, and health care raises the larger question of architectural planning at the Hermitage. Archaeological research has shown that a double-pen dwelling was the standard for enslaved Hermitage families. Four brick duplexes were located at the Field Quarter: one brick and two log duplexes were at the First Hermitage area, and at least one duplex was located in the mansion yard area. Each duplex measured twenty by forty feet, suggesting that Jackson had a clear architectural type for Hermitage slave quarters.

The Triplex structure's variation from the standard duplex may result from specific ideas that Jackson had regarding use of that space. He may have wanted to consolidate multiple activities into one building close to the man-

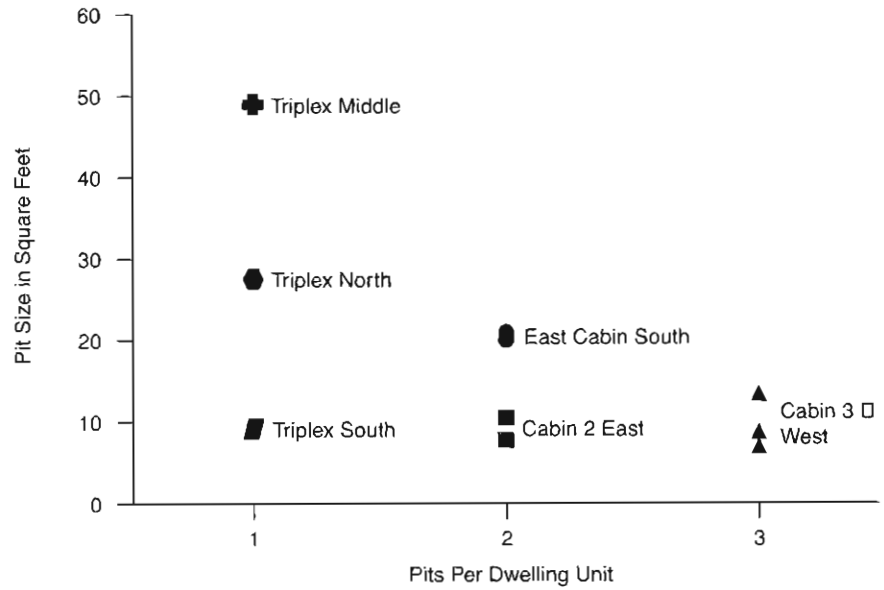

FIG. 2.13. Subfloor pit quantity and size per dwelling unit at the Hermitage.

sion. In doing so, he would have created a locus of activity, purposefully designing the Triplex as an activity area, a site of domestic control where he could place a prominent enslaved person, or group of people, to preside over the activities of others. A fence line running between the mansion and the Triplex created a physical barrier between the yard spaces of the quarters behind the mansion and the mansion yard, yet the quarters were still close enough for easy supervision. For the enslaved population, however, a production space like the Triplex Middle may have become a place for trade, communication, and creative expression. If Jackson placed the seamstress as an overseer of the young, elderly, and sick, she would have been in frequent contact with much of the enslaved community.

One architectural feature of Hermitage slave dwellings, the subfloor pit or root cellar, may support this hypothesis. The subfloor pit at the Triplex Middle is by far the largest excavated at the Hermitage to date (Figure 2.13). At 6.5 x 7.5 feet, the pit's size may be directly correlated with the abundance indexes that suggest Triplex Middle residents had more personal items to store than other slaves at the Hermitage. The substantial, brick-lined cellar provided storage space for a variety of items ranging from food and dry goods to children's toys.

Recent work suggesting that subfloor pits functioned like safety deposit boxes in dwellings that contained non-kin-based residents applies nicely to the Triplex Middle (Neiman 1997). Neiman argues that slaves constructed pits to protect their belongings, particularly when individuals lived with non-kin or when dwellings were not easily secured. Dwellings with multiple, small pits point to households of unrelated, perhaps uncooperative individuals who maintained their own personal items in separate storage areas (ibid.). Following this argument, the Triplex Middle's single pit indicates that a cooperative, kin-based household occupied the unit. If their living space also functioned as an activity center through which many different people passed on a daily basis, those living in the Triplex Middle may have constructed a large and highly visible cellar for the storage and protection of their personal objects. A non-family member opening the large pit in the Triplex Middle would have drawn attention, therefore effectively discouraging pilfering.

The architecturally distinctive Triplex structure may have linked Jackson, Gracy, and the larger enslaved population. Although Jackson may have created the Triplex Middle space as the center of activity and daily control over a certain segment of the enslaved population, it is possible that slaves transformed a portion of the mansion backyard into a space receptive to their own economic and social needs. I suggest that the Triplex Middle served as a meeting place through which most of the enslaved at the Hermitage traveled at certain times. Goods such as fancy fabrics and clothing accoutrements may have been exchanged, as well as gossip and other forms of specialized knowledge. It is highly possible that the seamstress, with her knowledge of plantation activities and access to desired goods, transformed the Triplex Middle into a nexus of interslave social activity incongruous with its location within the socially controlled realm of the plantation backyard.

Conclusion

Enslaved individuals created and participated in economic and social systems based on their skills, interactions with the owners and overseers, and relationships with individuals outside the plantation. Gracy Bradley may not have earned her freedom as a seamstress but the Abundance Indexes suggest that she and her family had significantly more non-provisioned items than other enslaved households on the property. Abundance Index values from the Triplex Middle are notably higher than at the Triplex North, suggesting that access to goods at the Hermitage was not simply a result of one's proximity to the mansion.

Gracy's work in the White House, Alfred's mobility as a wagoner, and their proximity to the mansion may have given them opportunities to earn money through tips. Their proximity to the Jackson family may have afforded them gifts not normally distributed to the other slaves. It is possible that Gracy's skills as a seamstress, and her direct access to adornment items, made her a desired trading partner within the enslaved community at the Hermitage.

If the Triplex Middle also served as a clothing production center and a quarter for the employment of the sick and young, it would have also linked enslaved individuals from all three areas of The Hermitage plantation—the Mansion Backyard, the First Hermitage, and the Field Quarter. Even if Jackson's intent was for the Triplex Middle to serve as a quarter for the supervision of sick or aged, it may have become an exchange center for trade and information. Gracy and her family possibly traded cloth remnants, lace, and other adornment items for the goods and services of slaves who passed through or near the building. Gracy's and Alfred's proximity to the Jackson family most likely gave them access to information and gossip that was useful to the rest of the enslaved community. The size of the Triplex Middle's subfloor pit and the tobacco pipe index value are other possible signs that slaves unrelated to Gracy and Alfred passed through the dwelling for work, trade, or socializing.

The use of Abundance Indexes from the remains of four enslaved households suggests that many complex relationships lie beneath the traditional models, posited by historians and archaeologists, that imply competitive and antagonistic relations between slaves assigned to field work and those who worked in and near the mansion. An enslaved individual's placement on the plantation landscape may have been a result of their occupation, but this study suggests that not all slaves living in proximity to the mansion received the same treatment and access to goods. Specialized occupations gave certain slaves access to money and goods and, when allied with similarly successful or valued individuals either through marriage or kinship, resulted in households with potentially more economic success than other households. This study explores the complexity of a single occupation at one plantation. It holds out the promise for future studies of enslaved women and men who, individually and together, used their skills and knowledge to create access to material and social capital within the bounds of slavery.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This article has accrued many debts. I would like to thank the Ladies' Hermitage Association and Earthwatch for support of the Hermitage Archaeology Program, which made these excavations possible. Marsha Mullins, curator at the Hermitage, and Elizabeth Kellar, director of archaeology at the Hermitage, were exceptionally helpful and generous with their time and data. The comments of Charles Orser and one anonymous reviewer helped clarify my thinking on several points, and I am grateful to Barbara Clark Smith for our lively discussion about Elizabeth Keckly. This paper benefited greatly from the comments of James Deetz, Clifton Ellis, Garrett Fesler, Adria LaViolette, Larry McKee, Fraser Neiman, Drake Patten, Charles Perdue, Hal Sharp, Brian Thomas, Aaron Wunsch, and Amy Young. I am especially grateful to Larry McKee for supporting my work at the Hermitage. Special thanks are due to Clifton Ellis and Aaron Wunsch for enduring multiple drafts and to Fraser Neiman for helping to make the data come to life.

This material is based upon work supported under a National Science Foundation Graduate Fellowship. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

NOTES

1. Research conducted by Brian Thomas suggests that the enslaved community at the Hermitage created and participated in social relationships distinct from the disciplinary regime imposed by Jackson and his overseers (Thomas 1998). Although Thomas demonstrates complexity in ceramic assemblages among the Triplex Middle, the Yard Cabin, the South Cabin, and Cabin 3, he suggests that a relatively even distribution of artifacts such as beads, adornment items, children's toys, writing slates, and gun parts point to a complex set of cooperative social relations among the enslaved population (Thomas 1995, 1998).

2. The receipts indicate that checks for one hundred and four hundred dollars were written to Mr. Hebbs, owner of Gracy and her family (Dorris 1913; papers of Andrew Jackson). These receipts most likely represent a down payment or partial payment, since a family of five slaves would have commanded quite a bit more money.

3. Hermitage slave dwelling names were assigned by archaeologists in the 1970s and 1980s and have no historical connection to the nineteenth-century naming conventions at the Hermitage.

4. Rachel Jackson died in December 1827, prior to Jackson's departure for the White House. The Hermitage mansion was completed in 1821, and the Triplex was built shortly thereafter. Rachel Jackson would have only supervised work in the mansion backyard for about seven years before her death. Sarah Yorke Jackson married Jackson Jr. and took over house duties in the early 1830s.

5. Buttons from the Triplex North have yet to be analyzed to the same degree as buttons from other Hermitage residences. I have excluded discussion of Triplex North button types for this reason.

6. Gracy Bradley and Alfred Jackson only had two children. Although it is possible the high amusement index value points only to the activities of one family, I suggest that the large quantity of leisure items may indicate that the Triplex Middle was the location of broader community activities.

REFERENCES

Acton, William
1972 *Prostitution Considered in Its Moral, Social, and Sanitary Aspects.* London: Frank Cass and Co. Originally published 1857.

Bassett, John S. (editor)
1937 *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, Volume 5.* Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, D.C.

Baumgarten, Linda
1988 "Clothes for the People": Slave Clothing in Early Virginia. *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts* 14(2):26–70.
1991 Plains, Plaid, and Cotton: Woolens for Slave Clothing. *Ars Textrina* 15:203–221.
2003 *What Clothes Reveal: The Language of Clothing in Colonial and Federal America.* The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in Association with Yale University Press, New Haven.

Benberry, Cuesta
1992 *Always There: The African-American Presence in American Quilts.* Kentucky Quilt Project, Louisville, Ky.

Breeden, James O.
1980 *Advice among Masters: The Ideal in Slave Management in the Old South.* Greenwood Publishing Co., Westport, Conn.

Dorris, Mary C.
1913 *The Hermitage: Home of General Andrew Jackson, near Nashville, Tennessee.* Brandon, Nashville, Tenn.

Durand, Sally Graham
1977 The Dress of the Antebellum Field Slave in Louisiana and Mississippi, 1830–1860. Master's thesis, Louisiana State Univ. and Agricultural and Mechanical College.
Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth
1988 *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women in the Old South.* Univ. of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.
Fry, Gladys-Marie
1990 *Stitched from the Soul.* Dutton Studio Books, New York.
Galle, Jillian, and Fraser Neiman
2003 Patterns of Tea and Tableware Consumption on Late-Eighteenth-Century Slave Quarter Sites. Paper presented at the Society for Historical Archaeology Annual Meeting, Providence, R.I.
Genovese, Eugene
1976 *Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made.* Vintage Books, New York.
Heath, Barbara
1997 Slavery and Consumerism: A Case Study from Central Virginia. *African American Archaeology: Newsletter of the African American Archaeology Network* 19:1–8.
1999 Buttons, Beads, and Buckles: Contextualizing Adornment within the Bounds of Slavery. In *Historical Archaeology, Identity Formation, and the Interpretation of Ethnicity*, edited by Maria Franklin and Garrett Fesler, pp. 47–69. Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and Dietz Press, Richmond, Va.
Hunt, Patricia
1996 The Struggle to Achieve Individual Expression through Clothing and Adornment: African American Women under and after Slavery. In *Discovering the Women in Slavery*, edited by Patricia Morton, pp. 227–240. Univ. of Georgia Press, Athens.
Joyner, Charles
1991 The World of the Plantation Slaves. In *Before Freedom Came*, edited by Edward D.C. Campbell Jr. with Kym Rice, pp. 51–100. Univ. Press of Virginia, Charlottesville.
Keckley, Elizabeth
1868 *Behind the Scenes: Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House.* G. W. Carleton & Co., New York.
MacDonald, Anne
1988 *No Idle Hands: The Social History of American Knitting.* Ballantine Books, New York.

McKee, Larry
1992 Summary Report on the 1991 Field Quarter Excavation. Ms. on file, Ladies Hermitage Association, Hermitage, Tenn.
1995 The Earth Is Their Witness. *Sciences* (Mar./Apr.):36–41.
McKee, Larry, Brian Thomas, and Jennifer Bartlett
1994 Summary Report on the 1993 Hermitage Mansion Yard Excavation. Ms. on file, Ladies Hermitage Association, Hermitage, Tenn.
Mellon, James (editor)
1988 *Bullwhip Days: The Slaves Remember.* Avon Books, New York.
Morton, Patricia (editor)
1996 *Discovering the Women in Slavery: Emancipating Perspectives in the American Past.* Univ. of Georgia Press, Athens.
Neiman, Fraser
1997 Sub-Floor Pits and Slavery in Eighteenth- and Early-Nineteenth-Century Virginia. Paper presented at the Thirtieth Annual Meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology, Corpus Christi, Tex.
Neiman, Fraser, Leslie McFaden, and Derek Wheeler
2000 Archaeological Investigation of the Elizabeth Hemings Site (44AB438). Monticello Dept. of Archaeology Technical Report Series No. 2. at http://www.monticello.org/archaeology/publications/hemings.pdf.
Perdue, Charles, Thomas Barden, and Robert Phillips
1976 *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves.* Indiana Univ. Press, Bloomington.
Proctor, Molly
1990 *Needlework Tools and Accessories.* B. T. Batsford, London.
Rawick, George P. (editor)
1972 *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography.* Vol. 16. Greenwood Publishing Co., Westport, Conn.
Rogers, C. Lynn
1992 Summary of South Cabin Site Button Analysis. Ms. on file. Ladies' Hermitage Association, Hermitage, Tenn.
1993 Summary of Cabin Three Site Button Analysis. Ms. on file. Ladies' Hermitage Association, Hermitage, Tenn.
1995 Summary of Triplex Middle Site Button Analysis. Ms. on file. Ladies' Hermitage Association, Hermitage, Tenn.
Rogers, Gay Ann
1983 *An Illustrated History of Needlework Tools.* John Murray Publishers, London.

Russell, Aaron
1997 Material Culture and African American Spirituality at the Hermitage. *Historical Archaeology* 31(2):63–80.
Savitt, Todd L.
1988 Slave Health and Southern Distinctiveness. In *Disease and Distinctiveness in the American South*, edited by Todd L. Savitt and James Harvey Young, pp. 120–153. Univ. of Tennessee Press, Knoxville.
Smart-Martin, Anne
1991 Buying Your Way to the Top: Acquisition Patterns of Consumer Goods in Colonial Virginia. Paper presented at the Society for Historical Archaeology Annual Conference, Richmond, Va.
1996 Sukey's Mirror: Consumption, Commodities, and Cultural Identity in Eighteenth-Century Virginia. Paper Presented at the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Chapel Hill, N.C.
Smith, Samuel D.
1976 *An Archaeological and Historical Assessment of the First Hermitage.* Division of Archaeology, Tennessee Dept. of Conservation, Nashville.
Tandberg, Gerilyn
1980 Field Hand Clothing in Louisiana and Mississippi during the Antebellum Period. *Dress* 5:89–104.
Tandberg, Gerilyn, and Sally Graham Durand
1981 Dress-Up Costumes for Field Slaves of Ante-Bellum Louisiana and Mississippi. *Costume* (15):41–48.
Thomas, Brian
1995 *Community among Enslaved African Americans on the Hermitage Plantation, 1820s–1850s.* Ph. D. diss., Dept. of Anthropology, State Univ. of New York at Binghamton, New York. University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Mich.
1998 Power and Community: The Archaeology of Slavery at the Hermitage Plantation. *American Antiquity* 63(4):531–551.
Ugan, Andrew, and Jason Bright
2001 Measuring Foraging Efficiency with Archaeological Faunas: The Relationship between Relative Abundance Indices and Foraging Returns. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 28:309–1321.
White, Deborah G.
1991 Female Slaves in the Plantation South. In *Before Freedom Came*, edited by Edward D. C. Campbell Jr. with Kym Rice, pp. 101–122. Univ. Press of Virginia, Charlottesville.

CHAPTER 3

Granny Midwives: Gender and Generational Mediators of the African American Community

LAURIE A. WILKIE

"Ar'n't I a woman?" Sojourner Truth challenged an audience of white middle-class women after detailing the labors she performed and the oppressions she had endured (White 1985:13). Perhaps today the power of this question has been lost to us, for our understandings of what it is to be a woman have been so profoundly expanded—despite need for further progress. For Sojourner Truth and other African American women of her time, the reality was that their experiences and color clearly placed them outside of the box of "True Womanhood" carefully drawn in hegemonic discourse. Instead, black women were socially constructed in dominant debates as the foil of white womanhood, its polar opposite. Whereas white women were pure (sexually unavailable and uninterested), naturally doting mothers, and fragile, black women were constructed as sexually aggressive, miserable mothers, and destined for heavy manual labor (Davis 1983; Giddings 1984; Collins 2000).

The controlling images of black womanhood that became entrenched during enslavement—that of the loyal mammy, the sexually lascivious jezebel, and the dominating matriarch—continue to shape public perceptions and policies that affect the African American community (Collins 2000; Roberts 1997). While strictly documentary histories of the African American experience must draw upon materials that were constructed primarily from the dominant group's perspective, archaeology offers the opportunity to explore through materiality the ways that African Americans created and maintained their own expectations of gender roles, obligations, and ideologies. In such a way, we can de-center the views of the hegemonic discourse and explore practices of relevance to the African American community.

My vision of a realized engendered African American archaeology would be one that is politically engaged in feminist thought (after Franklin 2001) and