Uzi Baram

# Cosmopolitan Meanings of Old Spanish Fields: Historical Archaeology of a Maroon Community in Southwest Florida

ABSTRACT

Since 2005, a multidisciplinary public anthropology program has been looking for Angola, an early-19th-century maroon community south of Tampa Bay. Angola provides a link between the beacons of freedom in the northern tier of Florida (Fort Mosé, Prospect Bluff, and the Suwannee settlements) and the later settlements of African Seminoles in the Bahamas and Central Florida. With few documentary resources available, a map is used as an entry point to the lifeways of the maroons of Florida. While labeled Old Spanish Fields, the location represents a place where diverse individuals came together as maroons and interacted with Seminoles, British filibusters, and Cuban fishermen, among others, in the shadow of the Spanish Empire. Their crops indicate the resilience of the peoples who fought for their freedom from slavery. With American rule, the community was devastated, its landscape erased, and the cosmopolitan community unmixed.

## Introduction

Joshua Reed Giddings (1795–1864), an Ohio congressman (1838–1859) and later U.S. consul general in Canada, was a fierce critic of slavery. In 1858, he published *The Exiles of Florida, or the Crimes Committed by Our Government against the Maroons, Who Fled from South Carolina and Other Slave States, Seeking Protection under Spanish Laws* to reveal the U.S. government's support for slavery (Giddings 1858). *The Exiles of Florida* provides documentation on American policy in Spanish La Florida (Twyman 1999) and on the struggles of the maroons to live in freedom. To start the book, Giddings (1858:28) invoked an idyllic image of those who found liberty in Florida: "When Mr. Madison assumed the duties of President (March 4, 1809), the Exiles were quietly enjoying their freedom; each sitting under his own vine and fig-tree, without molestation or fear." The biblical imagery is fanciful, but this article will argue that Giddings provides an intriguing entry point for reconstructing the lifeways of the maroon communities during the second Spanish period (1783–1821), one that includes maroon resistance and resilience. The image he constructs for Florida is muffled in history, but by following the strand in historical archaeology that recognizes images as artifacts (Little 1992; Loren and Baram 2007), the meaning of the maroon agriculture of Florida will be explored at the intersect of documents and the cultural landscape, with the 1837 map (Figure 1) that John Lee Williams included in *The Territory of Florida, or Sketches of the Topography, Civil and Natural History of the Country, the Climate, and the Indian Tribes from the First Discovery to the Present Time, with Map, View, &c.* being the central example. Expanding on the historical archaeology of landscapes (Branton 2009), this study mines the archival record for additional insights into the lifeways of people of African heritage escaping from slavery, using the map and the descriptions of the landscape as artifacts of the early-19th-century Florida frontier. The specific mention of Old Spanish Fields near the Manatee River in southwestern Florida, this article argues, offers an additional resource for exploring the texture of maroon life in Spanish La Florida.

## Resistance to Slavery and Cosmopolitan Communities

As Orser (1998:69) has remarked, maroons are an attractive focus for historical archaeologists, offering an example of people whose lives are lived in the shadows of the state, represented by others, if at all. Weik (1997), in an important framework for maroon archaeology, explores the central tropes of resistance and resilience, transformation and continuity for Palmares in Brazil, using the *quilombo* described by Dutch and Portuguese writers in the 17th century as a central example. The framework's key questions revolve around the identity and identification of the people who created a complex, multifaceted community. For Palmares (1605–1694) according to Rowlands (1999:340): "Archaeologically ... we have a complex picture that suggests neither

*Historical Archaeology,* 2012, 46(1):108–122.


FIGURE 1. The John Lee Williams 1837 map of Florida. North is at the top of the map. (Courtesy, National Archives, Washington D.C.)

a multi-ethnic society of fusion and assimilation, nor one of ethnic difference. In fact there is a possibility of a more pluralistic structure." For Funari (1999:317), Palmares

> provides a special vantage point from which we can study how runaway slaves, far from Africa, forged a new culture in Brazil and made it operate for almost a century. Considering that the roots of Palmares lie in resistance to slavery, we can learn much about how these people were able to defy the dominant slavocracy in the country.

Resistance to slavery created the conditions for a dynamic society, one with Jews, Muslims, and other persecuted people, as well as

Europeans who may have joined the blacks of Palmares, Africans, and descendants of Africans who professed a Christianity syncretized with African belief and practice (Funari 1999:313). That multiplicity is found in other maroon communities. White (2010:477) presents the dynamic as convergence for Kumako in Suriname, with Africans and indigenous people in a "parallel quest for refuge." Deagan and Landers (1999:268) recognize Florida's Fort Mosé as "a polyglot community incorporating a wide variety of cultural traditions." For the central example in this article, there are multiple terms possible for the self-emancipated Africans and African Americans of Spanish La Florida, including the Black Seminoles, maroons, African Seminoles, and the term that Joshua Giddings (1858) used, the exiles; the multiplicity is an indication of the fluidity of life on the run, as well as the dynamics of settlements just beyond the reach of those who labeled them escaped slaves.

That multiplicity, complexity, and fluidity of social relations for different peoples, for Palmares, Kumako, and Fort Mosé fit a growing interest in archaeology going beyond multivocality (Hodder 2007) and exploring diverse communities in terms of cosmopolitanism (Meskell 2009). There are several aspects to cosmopolitanism: Meskell (2009) follows the lead of Appiah (2006) for professional and personal responsibilities in our interconnected world. Other strands consider the cosmopolitan individual in history. For maroon communities like Palmares, as will be suggested below for this article's case study, cosmopolitan communities are places of cultural multiplicities including the diversity of people of African descent as well as their European supporters and Native American allies. The conditions involved in antislavery resistance encouraged new social formations and formulations. While there are multiple challenges in revealing such communities, particularly from the documentary record, as Funari (1999:317) notes for Palmares: archaeologists can "read meaning *into* a written or unwritten text, instead of *out of* it," a significant point for this article. Cosmopolitanism is an ethic of responsibility, but also a means to unlock the misidentifications of complex communities and reveal their interlocking social identities.

A community of maroons in Southwest Florida only recently added to the list of havens of freedom from slavery (Brown 1990; Baram 2008) offers the opportunity to investigate maroon lifeways in early-19th-century Florida. Saunt (1999:5) notes Florida was under Spanish rule during that period but was barely Spanish in demography, with new identities and groupings created in the shadow of the empire's gaze. The people living south of Tampa Bay were nearly erased from history, but focused investigations are recovering aspects of their legacy on the Florida frontier, in an area that was dominated by intertidal mangrove forest with extensive oyster beds in the river, on land that was mostly upland pine flatwoods and mixed hardwood forest.

## Looking for Angola on the Florida Landscape

In 1990 historian Canter Brown provided the first scholarly account of a community of free blacks and self-emancipated slaves on southern Tampa Bay that he identified as Angola. Brown (1990) took the name from a Cuban fisherman's unsuccessful 1828 land claim for 640 ac. on the Manatee River (Figure 2). The Caldiz land claim fits the social dynamics for the late-18th- through early-19th-century fishing villages, known as ranchos, on the gulf keys. Cuban fishermen would spend from September to March (Covington 1993:27) fishing the water and trading with Seminoles and free blacks in the interior. Such relationships and industry flourished under Spanish rule, but were challenged during the British period (1763–1783), unraveled when the United States (beginning in 1821) took the peninsula, and ended with the Second Seminole War (1835–1842). The relationships among fishing communities, farmers, hunters, and warriors are part of a social world that vanished after southern Florida began attracting Anglo-American settlers in the 1840s; the landscape of those cosmopolitan communities was erased, and its history nearly forgotten.

American control over Florida came after a series of military incursions into Spanish territory. In the early 19th century, a series of military engagements across northern Florida occurred during the War of 1812, the Patriots War, and the First Seminole War. The First Seminole War included significant battles at the Apalachicola River (1816) and Suwannee River

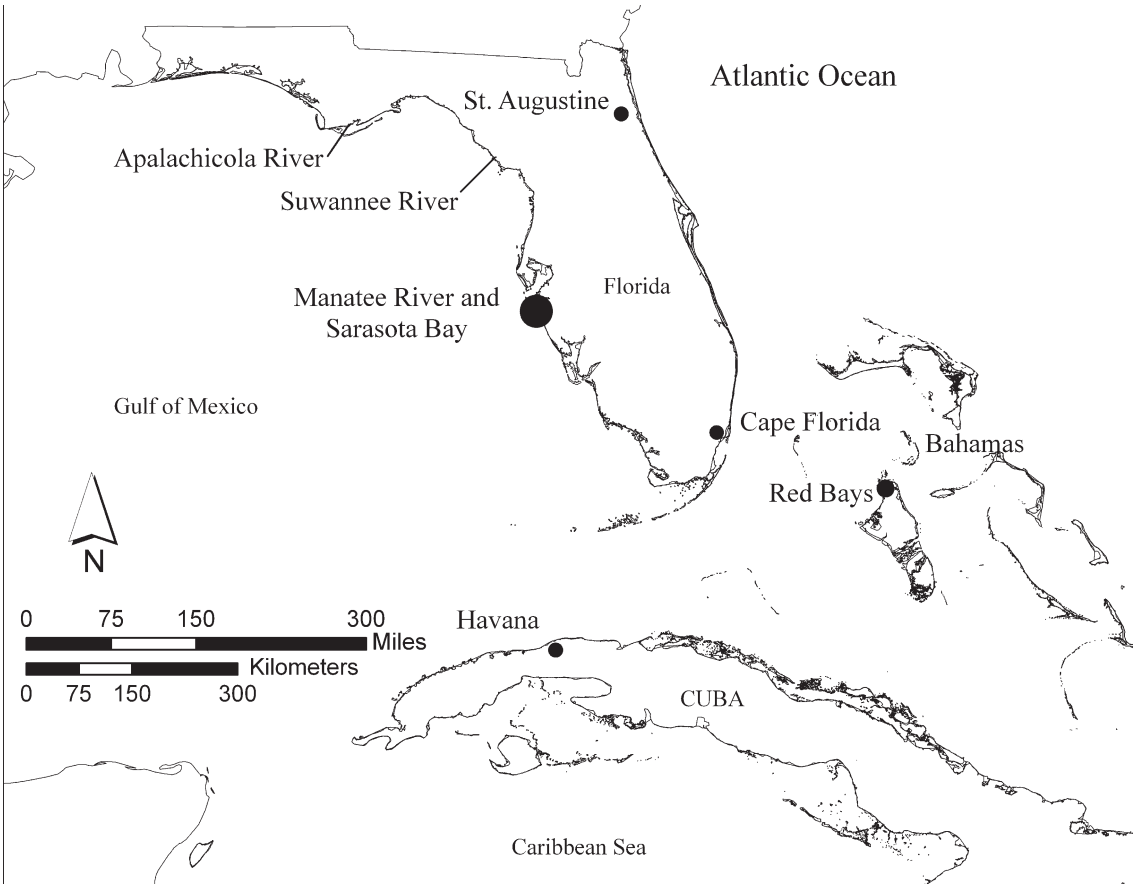


FIGURE 2. Map showing the location of the Manatee River and Sarasota Bay. (Map by Dan Hughes, 2010.)

(1818), both of which have received the attention of historians (Owsley 1985; Porter 1996; Saunt 1999). While there is abundant scholarship on the Second Seminole War, the period between the wars has received less attention. The archaeological search for Angola is filling the gaps in the historical scholarship.

Starting in late 2004, Vickie Oldham, then a Sarasota-based filmmaker, organized an interdisciplinary research team called Looking for Angola. Looking for Angola has presented the story of freedom in Florida in public lectures, videos, and on the Internet; team members have consulted with descendants and local community groups in public forums, and organized educational materials as part of the search for material remains of Angola (Baram [2012]). The exact physical location is challenging to pinpoint; the archival record offers only a general region for the community. Ethnographic studies by Rosalyn Howard (2002) found that Florida is remembered, generally, as the place of origin by the descendant community now on Andros Island in the Bahamas, but the precise locations of previous settlements were not passed down through the generations. Even after several years of the interdisciplinary research team presenting and discussing Angola across southwestern Florida with newspaper, television, and Internet attention, no memories of the community have come forward from an interested public. Yet several physical remains are suggestive of the maroon presence (Baram 2008), and comparisons between landscapes and the archival record point toward the area between Sarasota Bay and the Manatee River as the appropriate geography for the early-19th-century Angola community. Although initially focused on historical supplementation, as Weik (1997) notes is the case for much of maroon archaeology, research

into Angola now examines resistance and the dynamics of life for the Black Seminoles in the early-19th-century Tampa Bay region (Baram 2008), and this article expands on the search in terms of the cultural landscape.

Historical archaeologists have shown the potential of cultural landscape studies for revealing power relationships, ideology, and history. Recent syntheses include Branton (2009) and Spencer-Wood and Baugher (2010). The cultural landscape serves to create and reproduce the material conditions of social life, and thus physical remains are a useful entry point for understanding the ways in which class, gender, and ethnicity/race were experienced and transformed in the past. Waselkov (1997) identified the significance of written and cartographic archival documents for insights into mid-16th- through early-19th-century Indian fields across the U.S. Southeast. Noting that they have been underutilized, Waselkov (1997:191) interprets the information on Creek and Cherokee settlements and fields toward a transition to dependency on the market economy. There are fewer archival resources for Florida, but in the subtropical peninsula there are fragments for seeing the ways early-19th-century peoples met the challenges of the environment through a landscape perspective.

Situating documentary and archaeological sources and perspectives allows studies that are concerned with both the generalities and peculiarities of the past for a specific case study. In the search for the early-19th-century maroon community in Southwest Florida there are hints of a cultural landscape of resistance and of cosmopolitanism in the documentary record, although terminology of Anglo-Americans for the former Spanish territory requires an interpretation of their labeling of places. Building on the evidence for the tactic of falling back as resistance (Baram [2012]), in the search for Angola, the mention of Spanish fields will be situated within the social identities of Florida and offered as an avenue for revealing the maroon presence. The fields represent foods that sustained the Black Seminoles and their allies among the Cuban fishing communities and maybe even the British filibusters/military adventurers, and Seminoles. The cosmopolitanism of the era requires the recognition that Europeans and European Americans labeled places without acknowledging the complexities of social relationships in Florida between Native Americans and self-emancipated Africans.

## Brief History of African Florida

At its height, the southern Tampa Bay community represents an important moment in the larger history of Spanish La Florida as a haven from slavery (Brown 2005). Starting with Fort Mosè during the first Spanish period, self-emancipated Africans could cross into Florida and find havens for living in freedom. Flight from slavery by escaping into Florida was resistance, a threat to the slavery regime and ideology; there were consistent threats of attack and capture (Baram [2012]). In Florida, the Spanish organized the fugitives into militias (Deagan and Landers 1999). Later, British filibusters—Robert Ambrister, Edward Nicolls, among others—trained the warriors and provided weapons (Owsley 1985).

Florida was a region of refuge from slavery, but as a poorly controlled territory Florida was also an avenue for slave raiders. Some slave raiders took people who escaped, and slave traders used Florida for transport to an early-19th-century United States that banned the slave trade. For an early reference, see DuBois (1970:99,111,113) on the trade via East Florida. Fluid social identities and multilevel interactions among peoples emerged during the closing days of Spanish rule over Florida.

During the second Spanish period, the Gulf Coast was the nexus of resistance to slavery, with the fortification on the Apalachicola River (Florida site No. 8FR64), known alternatively as the Fort Blount, Prospect Bluff, and the Negro Fort, as a major rallying point for Seminoles and maroons (Saunt 1999; Millett 2007). Its destruction in 1816 pushed survivors south. Historian Claudio Saunt argues those events represent the end of a longstanding political economy: “Resistance to the new order would continue in the swamps of Florida, but it would be defensive rather than offensive” (Saunt 1999:288). Saunt (1999:290) quotes a 1733 letter to illustrate the shift as part of a larger change in the political economy of the region as the deerskin trade declined: “Before the 1780s, deerskins were, with few exceptions, the ‘best Thing’ Creeks had, and Creeks maintained ‘very little Distinction. ... Power was persuasive, and

leaders used rhetoric to compel their people.'" The Black Seminole survivors pushed south and organized hamlets near a Seminole town on the Suwannee River (Craig and Peebles 1969). The 1818 Battle of Suwannee forced the maroons even farther south, to the lands around southern Tampa Bay, away from their Seminole allies.

In 1818 Andrew Jackson's aide-de-camp James Gadsden (1937:248) called the community in Tampa Bay the "last rallying spot" for the Native Americans and Black Seminoles. The archives (Brown 1990, 2005) provide a view of that spot: Angola, at the nexus of international relations among Spain, Britain, and the United States, with an estimated 700 people—including warriors and others striving for freedom—living between the Manatee River and Sarasota Bay.

Spain did not control La Florida fully, and after protracted negotiations, the United States took the territory in 1821. Just as the transition occurred, a punishing military raid destroyed Angola and spread terror down the Gulf Coast; many from the maroon communities were killed and hundreds captured (Brown 1990, 2005). Correspondence between the Indian agent John Crowell and Secretary of War John C. Calhoun (Brown 2005) includes some of the names of captured residents of the Florida Gulf Coast: Prince, Hannah, Nancy, and Charles; as well as their ages, color, heights, and former owners. Others escaped from the raid and fled into the interior or across the Everglades; the list of those captured notes several escaping as they were taken to Georgia.

The names of those who escaped the trek northward provide a crucial link to the present-day communities in the Bahamas. Rosalyn Howard (2002:47,52) located an 1828 British list of Florida slaves who had been living in the Bahamas for seven years, and she correlated several names with military correspondence referenced by Brown (2005). Survivors of the turmoil in Florida, as it was transformed to American control, established a new home on Andros Island, first at Cedar Coppitt and then at Red Bays (Howard 2006:281). They dug wells and built log cabins, hunted with bows and arrows (Howard 2006:283), farmed, and later made a living diving for sponges, and in the 20th century by making baskets. The oral histories, as Rosalyn Howard (2002) has explained, invoke Florida but not the details of life on the peninsula. The history is an impressive example of the resistance to slavery that moved through challenging environmental conditions in the search for freedom.

The grand sweep of this history is important and still waits a full telling; this article focuses on the shifts from the dynamics of resistance to the maroon resilience in the Florida community's practices. Focusing on resilience, on the continuities in peoples' practices, pieces together the archival sources from several chapters of Black Seminole history to reveal the particular types of farming as well as the fighting that was part of their maroon lives. Weik (1997:88) suggested avoiding the opposition to European cultural influence and instead urged archaeologists to seek the dynamics of maroon lifeways. The details of daily life left faint traces in the archival record. The Andros Island conclusion of the flight from slavery is important for illuminating the southern Tampa Bay landscape that was nearly completely erased. Connecting Red Bays and Tampa Bay offers an avenue to reveal continuities for the Florida maroons but also to confront the erasure of the evidence of their lives in Florida.

## Maroon Archaeology in Florida

Maroon archaeology is challenging, as several historical archaeologists have noted (Weik 1997; Orser 1998; Baram 2008). The archaeological perspective on maroon life in Florida has benefited from the excavations of Pilaklikaha (8SM136), also known as Abraham's Old Town, after the famous Black Seminole leader of the Second Seminole War (1835–1842) period. Weik's (2005) excavation finds include lithics, ceramics (both European and Seminole), glass beads, trade-pipe fragments, bottle glass, brick, cut nails, and other metal fragments. Rather than any specialized material culture that identifies Black Seminoles, excavations at Pilaklikaha reveal mass-produced goods: escaping slavery did not mean isolation from the world economy. Those finds are significant for their contrast to Powell's Town (8CI198) and other camps in the Cove of the Withlacooche, an important Seminole area during the Second Seminole War; Weisman (2007:204–205) points out the lack such mass-produced goods, suggesting nativism among the Seminoles.

Another significant, and earlier, site is Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mosé, which Deagan and Landers (1999) explains was established in 1738 by Spanish governor Manuel Montiano as a sanctuary for Africans challenging slavery in English Carolina. In 1733 a decree from the king of Spain stated that any fugitive slave who sought sanctuary in Spanish Florida and who converted to Catholicism would be granted freedom; the community north of St. Augustine grew into an important center of resistance in La Florida. Excavations began in 1971 under Charles Fairbanks; Kathleen Deagan confirmed the site in 1976 through the ceramics, lead shot, bottle glass, pipe stems, nails, and beads and buttons recovered (Deagan and Landers 1999:272). Deagan and Landers (1999:270) cautions that the "archaeological evidence for the Mosé occupation is extremely ephemeral," but insights came forward from excavations. The faunal remains show a diet dominated by locally available estuarine fish and shellfish. They indicate fish caught by line rather than in nets, as well as heavy dependence on wild foods similar to that of local Native American groups, and with some traits similar to those of the St. Augustine diet (Deagan and Landers 1999:273). The material identity lacked items distinctively African in origin but was different from assemblages from excavations in St. Augustine (Deagan and Landers 1999:273). Deagan and Landers (1999:274) concludes that the archaeology program's success came through encouraging innovative archival research.

Fort Mosé was abandoned in 1763 when Florida was ceded to the British at the end of the Seven Years' War. The Spanish returned in 1783, but, to use Saunt's (1999) phrase, there was a new social order in the Southeast. During the second Spanish period (1783–1821), international competition, struggles for freedom, and a new cultural landscape developed in Florida; one that left only shallow remains.

## Archaeology of the Second Spanish Period (1783–1821) in Florida

Saunt (1999:274) provides an intriguing image for one of the key sites of second Spanish-period Florida: All that "remains of this once formidable construction is a depression in the earth. It has left an even slighter impression on our historical consciousness." That formidable construction is the Negro Fort, also known as the British Fort, since filibusters helped organize it as a beacon of freedom at the start of the 19th century. Located on the Apalachicola River about 15 mi. north of Apalachicola Bay on the Gulf of Mexico, the Negro Fort had a wide moat, cannons mounted on its ramparts, and a powder magazine within the 2 ac. enclosure (Saunt 1999:274). The people who came to this impressive fortification were diverse; not only in terms of the groupings, such as people of African descent, Native Americans, and the British who were their allies, but as the historian Nathaniel Millett (2005:250) notes: "The former slaves ... came from both Floridas [referring to East and West Florida], the United States, and Indian territories. Their former masters were Ibero-Americans, Anglo-Americans, French, and Indian." They were influenced by their varied African backgrounds and the slave owners, yet, in the search for freedom, they came together as maroons at the Negro Fort.

Archaeology at the Negro Fort began with a site visit by John W. Griffin in 1950. A drawing of the American-period Fort Gadsden (United States Topographic Bureau 1818) includes the fort destroyed in 1816 (Figure 3), and Griffin (1950:257) identified an "irregular mound of sand" east of Fort Gadsden, the successor fortification built by the U.S. military, as the magazine for the Negro Fort. In the mound, Griffin (1950:260) located porcelains, European earthenwares, lead balls, iron nails and other rusted metal fragments, and brushed pottery.

Archaeological trenching at the site (8FR50) in 1961–1962 recovered evidence of its destruction (Poe 1963). The most common artifacts were badly bent pieces of barrel hoops—seemingly from the exploded powder barrels—and musket balls (Poe 1963:8–10). Along with military-uniform buttons, the artifacts "give some interesting glimpses into ... a military outpost," and the range of temporal periods, from Native American through the American period, indicates that "particular area was an ideal place for habitation" (Poe 1963:16). The archaeology illustrates the armed resistance by the Black Seminoles, the active military confrontations described in the historical record, but the community by the fort was engaged in more than military confrontation. As Boyd (1937:81) notes,

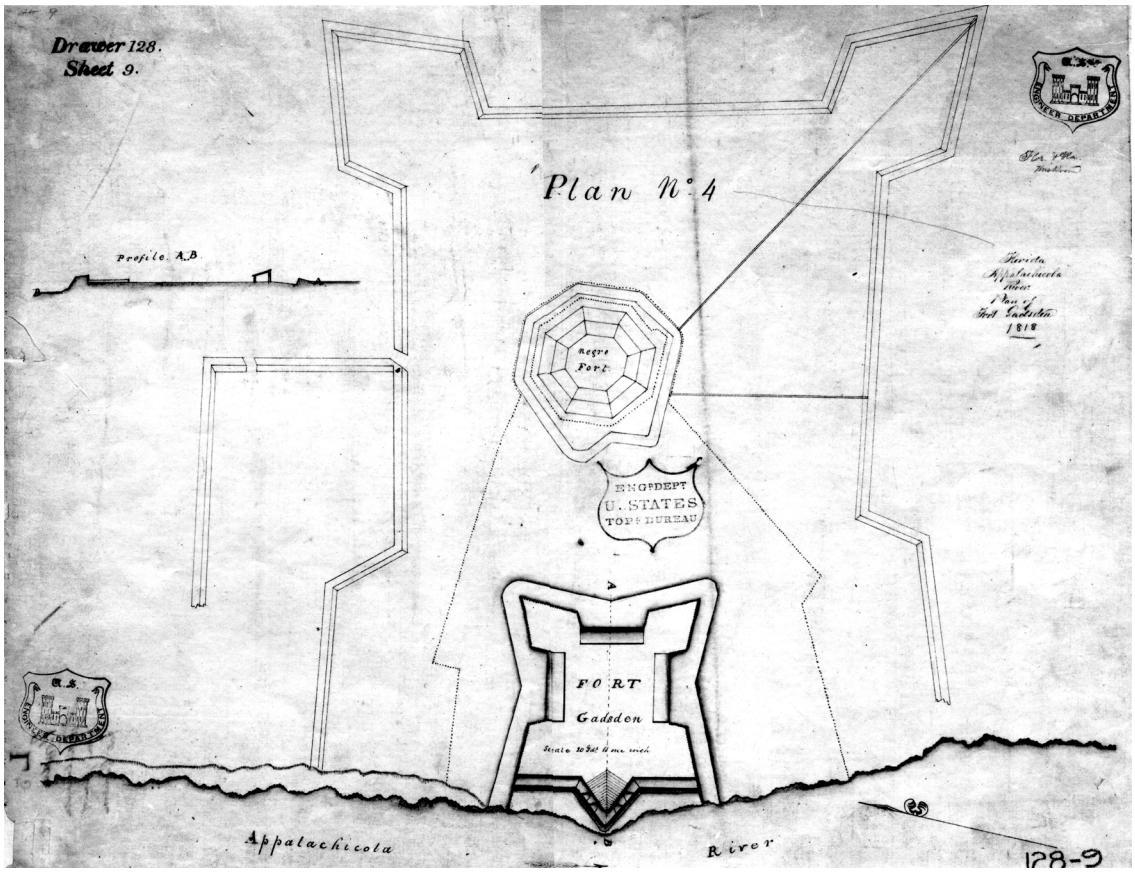


FIGURE 3. Map of Fort Gadsden, with remains of the Negro Fort, 1818 (United States Topographic Bureau 1818). (Courtesy, National Archives, Washington, D.C.)

there were many people outside the outpost: "The American negroes had not congregated at the fort but were cultivating plantations along the river banks. On hearing of the approach of the army most of them fled to the Seminoles." Without taking away from Giddings's (1858:53) point that "there was no alternative other than war or slavery; and they greatly preferred death upon the battle field, to chains and the scourge," there were other aspects to their maroon lives. Giddings's (1858:36) history notes that in the autumn of 1815, just before the attack, they "gathered their crops, provided for the support of the aged and infirm, as well as their children." Those crops were extensive, as Williams (1837:203) mentions that "their fields extended fifty miles up the river."

The survivors of the July 1816 United States Navy assault on the fortification fled south to the Suwannee River. A sketch map of the Suwannee community (Young 1818) (Figure 4) shows a scattering of hamlets for the Black Seminoles, in contrast to the nucleated Seminole settlement. In 1818, the Battle of Suwannee pushed survivors even farther south, to Tampa Bay.

## The Material Finds from the Manatee River

Matthews (1983) provides a detailed history for the Manatee River and Sarasota Bay, the southern frontier of the Tampa Bay region. Major Spanish expeditions landed in Tampa Bay and moved northward (famously, Panfilo de Narvaez in 1528 and Hernando de Soto in 1539) and were followed by other explorers in the 16th century; in 1757 Don Francisco Maria Celi charted Tampa Bay, and in 1793 Vicente Folch y Juan named the river, now called the Manatee River, the Oyster River due to its

oysterbeds. Folch noted the only settlements were two Native American villages on the north side of Tampa Bay (Holmes 1965). There are no extant maps that identify a settlement on the Manatee River during the late 18th or early 19th centuries. The documented permanent settlement of the river started two decades after the United States gained control of Florida. Yet the Anglo-American pioneers did not come to an empty land; their written descriptions of the landscape are a key to identifying the location of Angola.

In the late 18th century, Jose Maria and Joaquin Caldez had a rancho on Anna Maria Island, a key that lies to the south of the mouth of the Manatee River. The fishing community would have been connected to the resources of the Manatee River, likely including an alliance with the maroons in the interior. The 1821 Onís-Adams Treaty that transferred Florida from Spain to the United States included a provision for land claims. The Caldez 1828 land claim used "Angola" to label land on the banks of the Manatee River. In the land claims, Jose Maria Caldez asserted he settled 640 ac. on the north side of the Manatee River in 1814, and Joaquin Caldez declared he settled the south side of the river in 1812. These claims were not accepted by the United States; the Caldez family moved its fishing enterprise to Charlotte Harbor.

In 1834, Baltimore merchant William Bunce set up a large rancho at the mouth of the Manatee River, with palmetto-thatched houses, a blacksmith shop, a carpenter shop, and a store and where Cubans, Indians, and African Americans lived and worked; in 1836, during the Second Seminole War Bunce relocated his rancho to the mouth of Tampa Bay. Except for Angola, the only other sustained settlement on the banks of the Manatee River started with the Anglo-American pioneers of 1841, who created the village of Manatee (Matthews 1983:129–130), which is now part of the city of Bradenton.

Several sites along the Manatee River are important for recovering the Angola community. Reexamination of previously excavated materials (Svekis 2005; Baram 2008) suggests a British filibuster presence at the mouth of the Manatee River. Excavations began with a

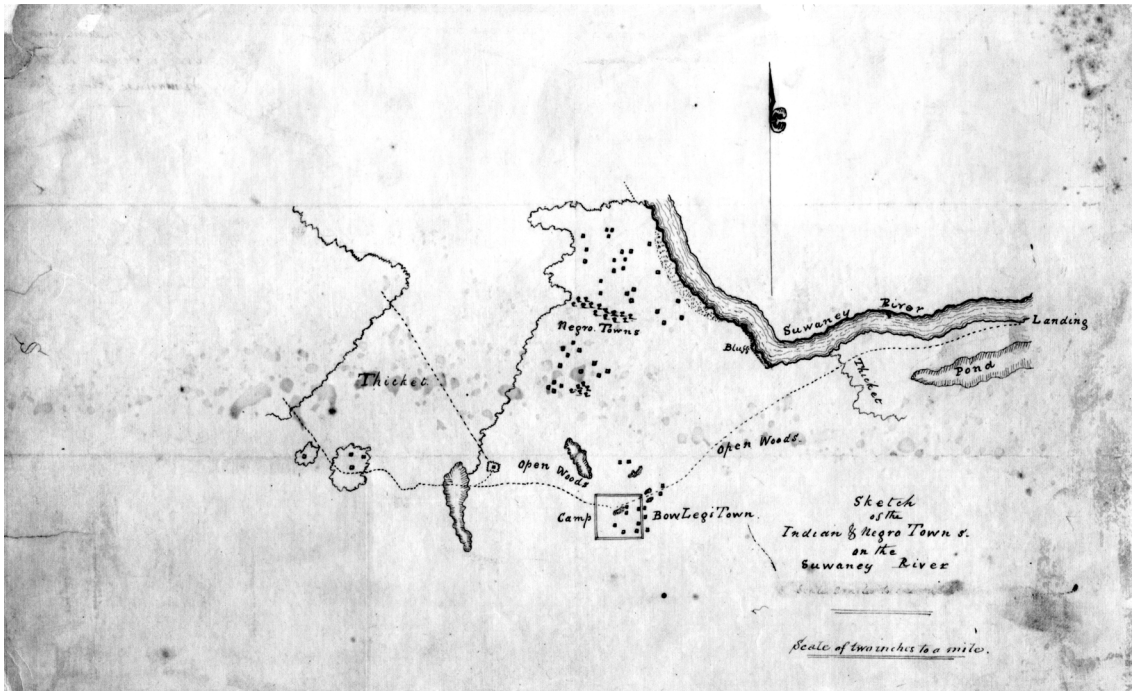


FIGURE 4. U.S. Captain Young's 1818 sketch map of the Suwannee settlements (Young 1818). (Courtesy, National Archives, Washington, D.C.)

shovel test-pit survey along the south side of the Manatee River (Burger 2005) that demonstrated the need for more efficient approaches. A systematic underwater survey of the Manatee River revealed the extent of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredging of the river bottom (Cozzi 2007). In 2007, a radar tomography survey of the area around the Manatee Mineral Spring confirmed the rich architectural history around the spring; with that survey information, archaeological investigations can avoid the material-rich components from the mid-to-late-19th-century Anglo-American settlement layer at the spring (Birken et al. 2008). Exploratory excavations provide some hints of the early-19th-century landscape (Baram 2010). The challenges of locating the physical remains of a community that sought to be hidden are not surprising, as scholars of maroon archaeology have noted (Orser 1998) that the task of locating and verifying material remains is difficult. For Angola, the combination of geography, documents, and archaeology suggest the region west of where the Braden River enters the Manatee River. The destructive attack of 1821 destroyed the location that United States forces (Gadsden 1937:248) had recognized as the last refuge for Black Seminoles during the second Spanish period. While the archaeological search continues, a trace written description hints at the Angola community's lifeways.

## The Old Fields

Maroon life was an existence under siege but was not confined to warfare. Black Seminoles produced an agricultural surplus (Weisman 2009), and the results of that production were imprinted on the landscape. After the transfer of Florida to the United States, those remains were noticed by observers of the region.

An important example is the John Lee Williams (1837) published early account of American Florida, *The Territory of Florida*. In its preface, Williams (1837:iii) exclaims that "I have traversed the country in various directions and have coasted the whole shore of the Peninsula. ... In addition to my own observations I have availed myself of the knowledge collected by others." Williams (1837:iii–iv) further states: "We can now fully account for the piles of ruins, the extensive moats, the deep ditches, the numerous roads, the broad avenues, and the wide spreading fields, that even now, show signs of former cultivation." In the book's appendix Williams (1837:300) notes the place where the Braden River meets the Manatee River: "The famous Arbuthnot and Ambrister had at one time a plantation here cultivated by two hundred negroes. The ruins of their cabins, and domestic untensils [*sic*] are still seen on the old fields." Alexander Arbuthnot and Robert Ambrister were convicted of supporting free blacks during the First Seminole War in a case that received widespread attention at the time; since Arbuthnot and Ambrister were hanged in 1818, Williams might have been mistaken about the names of those who supported the community at its height, but not the underlying identification. Millett (2007) provides more information on the British filibusters who supported the cause of freedom in Florida. *The Territory of Florida* included a detailed map, and near the point where the Braden River meets the Manatee, the place described as the old fields in Williams (1837:300), there is a caption: "Old Spanish Fields" (Figure 5). It was of those fields near Sarasota Bay that Williams (1837:24) writes: "We found in 1828, in the old gardens, among luxuriant weeds, tomatas, lima beans, and many aromatic herbs, perfectly naturalized." This image, situated as an artifact of a particular moment in Florida's history, is an important insight into the early-19th-century inhabitants along the Manatee River.

More than a decade later, Anglo-American pioneers looking for land documented old fields as well. In the fall of 1841, Josiah Gates and his brother-in-law, Miles Price, traveled from Fort Brooke to the mouth of the Manatee River. At a rancho at the mouth of the Manatee River, three individuals they identified as Spanish fishermen (Phillipi, Manuel, and Perico) took them to the mineral spring, today known as the Manatee Mineral Spring, and traveled 1 mi. south on a trail, where they came upon about 5 ac. of formerly cultivated land. The fields of "a once famous Indian village" were described as having "dried corn stalks and a few pumpkins left on the vine" (McDuffee 1967:25–26). With the Armed Occupancy Act, Gates and his family claimed the land and created the village of Manatee. The fields likely were those of the maroon community of Angola, with "Indian" being Black Seminoles.


FIGURE 5. Close-up of the Old Spanish Fields, from the 1837 John Lee Williams map of Florida. North is at the top of the map. (Courtesy, National Archives, Washington, D.C.)

## Escape Crops

Those descriptions offer an image of pre-1840 fields on the Manatee River, an entry point into the lives of the maroons of southwestern Florida. Since Howard (2002) has traced the continuity between the people of Florida's Gulf Coast and the communities on Andros Island, the Bahamas, Black Seminole farming can continue to be followed through the ethnographic record. In 1937, John Goggin (1939:24) reported that his interview with Felix McNeil on Andros Island indicated that Black Seminoles brought "seeds of corn, peas, and pumpkins" with them from Florida. More recently, Rosalyn Howard (2002:82, 2006:282) includes memories of the early subsistence strategy at Red Bays: "In the early days. ... Women were in charge of agriculture, growing corn, potatoes, pumpkins, and peas, and children of both genders worked in the fields. They harvested the tubers, eddy, bay rush, and cassava, which the women grated and washed" to make flour.

Pumpkins, peas, corn, and lima beans can be interesting details for a culture history on African Florida, or these details might be part of an argument to implore inclusion of ethnobotany in archaeological excavations (La Rosa Corzo 2005); but their significance is enhanced by a recent synthesis of agriculture and its relationship to state control by James Scott (2009). Scott has made contributions to anthropology that historical archaeologists have employed (Sivaramakrishnan 2008), through his concepts in *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* and *Seeing Like a State*. With *The Art of Not Being Governed*, James Scott (2009) offered an opportunity to study Angola as a refuge not just from slave raids but from empire. In an out-of-the-way place, a new society was created (Price 2006), resisting and escaping state control. Among the hammocks of the Florida frontier, the diverse people described for the Negro Fort, having escaped the Battle of Suwannee, and others coming from elsewhere

in the peninsula built houses and planted crops between Sarasota Bay and the Manatee River; the descriptions of the old fields offer an additional insight into the maroon cultural landscape.

The plants listed earlier for Angola are within the list of crops that Scott labels "escape agriculture" in his survey of peoples escaping state control and surveillance (Scott 2009:202–204). Scott moves the study of the peoples of upland Southeast Asia into an explicitly comparative and generalizing framework. The general characteristics of such escape crops for Scott (2009:199) include "staggered maturity, fast growing, and easily hidden," and escape crops describes an agriculture that evades "raiding by states or by freebooters." This is a useful formation for the maroons of Florida, seeking their freedom from slave raiders and the American military.

The plants were not uniquely used by the people of African heritage in Florida; Seminole settlements and Cuban fishing villages also are noted for having these examples of escape agriculture. This is not surprising; social identities in early-19th-century Florida were fluid in the shadow of empire; even in the intellectual centers of racism (Smedley 2007:161–176) the racial groupings were in flux even as the social hierarchy was becoming reified. Scott (2009:238) asserts a self-proclaimed radical constructionist view of social identity categories, but also makes the point that—overcoming the friction of terrain—those escaping the state were not isolated but continued to trade and have other economic interactions with those in and part of states. Scott (2009) argues that nearly everything about these peoples' livelihood, including agriculture, social organization, ideologies, and oral history is strategic. In addition, that assertion reminds us to model the archaeology with an appreciation of particular human lives, including an interest in practices and beliefs that lend them significance, the cosmopolitanism explained by Appiah (2006).

Escape agriculture offers a generalizing view of the choices made in the hammocks of Gulf Coast Florida, but the archaeological project searches for the material specificities of the maroon community in early-19th-century southern Tampa Bay. Brown (2002) provides a framework for recovering the role of the forest in the lives of Africans in America. For Brown (2002:290): "Enslaved Africans and their descendants on the coastal plain of South Carolina and Georgia ('the Lowcountry') also knew the forest as an integral part of their daily lives." Planting crops in such forests may fit that framework.

For the communities on Florida's Gulf Coast, trade with Cuban fishermen, training by the British filibusters, and the multifaceted relations with the Seminoles illustrate the integration, and fluidity, of people during the second Spanish period. For the period, even terminology shifts as the American race concept was expanding and transforming notions of identity (Smedley 2007). On the Gulf Coast of Florida, an observer from a slightly later period noted for a fishing rancho a range of identities as well as "mixed-blood children" (Covington 1993:27). Those allies helped with the escape to the Bahamas, but in leaving Florida the maroons lived separately from others on Andros Island, leading people on the islands to refer to them as "wild Indians" (Howard 2006). This provides an example of how shifts in empire unmix the complexities of social relations (Burbaker 1997), creating identifiable, separated groups that become people without history (Wolf 1982) and are forgotten.

## Conclusion

The search for Angola is ongoing; locating material remains of the maroon community is the central goal of the research, even as public outreach and investigations into local histories prove fruitful and are the clearest products of the public archaeology program. Contextualizing the descriptions of landscapes offers two productive avenues of research. One focuses on the use of descriptions of place as a data source; the other looks to the comparisons offered by James Scott (2009) on the settlement pattern and cultural landscape of escape in global perspective. The traces, in maps and journals, of the crops grown south of Tampa Bay are an avenue toward exposing the struggles of a people seeking freedom in the shadows of an empire. Reading meaning into descriptions of the old fields, whether identified as Spanish, as by John Lee Williams (1837), or as Indian fields by Josiah Gates (McDuffee 1967:25–26), brings out the fluid identities and complex community resilience of maroons throughout second Spanish-period Florida.

The descriptions of their cleared landscapes offer an illustration of Joshua Giddings's representation of exiles creating their lives in Florida, not under fig trees but with productive crops that allowed food and safety. This cosmopolitan dimension for maroon history opens up the "lifeworld" (Leone 2005:187) of living in a challenging locale during times of crisis. In doing so, the resilience of the people of the Gulf Coast comes forward from the traces in the documentary record when they are treated as artifacts of the second Spanish period. The search for physical remains from the archaeological record continues, but the descriptions expand the archaeological exposure for and the texture of resistance to slavery in Florida.

## Acknowledgements

I have learned a great deal from my association with Looking for Angola and its research team: Vickie Oldham, Canter Brown, Rosalyn Howard, Terry Weik, Coz Cozzi, Vibert White, and Louis Robison. The public outreach was funded by the Florida Humanities Council, Comcast Foundation, and the History Channel, and facilitated by Newspaper in Education and WEDU. The Florida Division of Historic Resources funded the first rounds of surveys; Witten Technologies, Inc., donated the radar tomography survey, and students from New College of Florida, the University of Central Florida, and Ringling College of Art and Design, as well as members of Time Sifters—the regional chapter of the Florida Anthropology Society—who participated in the exploratory excavations. The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education grant No. P116Z080257 provided resources for the project. Dan Hughes co-organized the Society for Historical Archaeology meeting session, with its offerings of a broad view of historical archaeology in Florida that help to situate this argument. The session participants, as well as Nancy Marie White, Sherry Svekis, and Karen Fraley offered important suggestions and help, but, in the end, the paper is the sole responsibility of its author.

## References

Appiah, Kwame Anthony
2006 *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*. W.W. Norton & Co., New York, NY.

Baram, Uzi
2008 A Haven from Slavery on Florida's Gulf Coast: Looking for Evidence of Angola on the Manatee River. *African Diaspora Archaeology Network Newsletter* 1:1–18. The African Diaspora Archaeology Network <http://www.diaspora.uiuc.edu/news0608/news0608.html>. Accessed 11 March 2012.
2010 Testing Radar Tomography at the Manatee Mineral Spring: Exploratory Excavations. Manuscript, Reflections of Manatee, Inc, Bradenton, FL.
[2012] Including Maroon History on the Florida Gulf Coast: Archaeology and Resistance on the Early Nineteenth Century Manatee River. In *The Limits of Tyranny: Archeological Perspectives on the Struggle against New World Slavery*, James A. Delle and Jill Bennett Gaieski, editors. University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville.

Birken, Ralf, Eric Klingelhofer, and Uzi Baram
2008 Finding Lost Settlements with Multi-Channel 3D GPR: Examples from North Carolina and Florida. *FastTIMES: News for the Near-Surface Geophysical Sciences* 13(3):42–50.

Boyd, Mark F.
1937 Events at Prospect Bluff on the Apalachicola River, 1808–1818: An Introduction to Twelve Letters of Edmund Doyle, Trader. *Florida Historical Quarterly* 26(2):55–96.

Branton, Nicole
2009 Landscape Approaches in Historical Archaeology: The Archaeology of Places. In *The International Handbook of Historical Archaeology*, Theresa Majewski and David Gaimster, editors, pp. 51–66. Springer, New York, NY.

Brown, Canter
1990 The "Sarrazota, or Runaway Negro Plantations": Tampa Bay's First Black Community, 1812–1821. *Tampa Bay History* 12(2):5–19.
2005 Tales of Angola: Free Blacks, Red Stick Creeks, and International Intrigue in Spanish Southwest Florida, 1812–1821. In *Go Sound the Trumpet: Selections in Florida's African American History*, D. H. Jackson, Jr. and C. Brown, Jr., editors, pp. 5–21. University of Tampa Press, Tampa, FL.

Brown, Ras Michael
2002 "Walk in the Feenda": West-Central Africans and the Forest in the South Carolina-Georgia Lowlands. In *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora*, Linda Haywood, editor, pp. 291–317. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY.

Burbaker, Rogers
1997 Aftermaths of Empire and the Unmixing of People. In *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building*, Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen, editors, pp. 155–180. Westview Press, Boulder, CO.

Burger, B. W.
2005 "Looking for Angola": Preliminary Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment Study. Manuscript, State of Florida, Division of Historic Resources, Tallahassee.

Covington, James W.
1993 *The Seminoles of Florida*. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

Cozzi, J. Coz
2007 "Looking For Angola": Underwater Survey for 2007. Manuscript, Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Historic Preservation, Tallahassee.

Craig, Alan K., and Christopher Peebles
1969 Captain Young's Sketch Map, 1818. *Florida Historical Quarterly* 48(2):176–179.

Deagan, Kathleen, and Jane Landers
1999 Fort Mosé: Earliest Free African-American Town in the United States. In *I, Too Am America: Archaeological Studies of African-American Life*, Theresa Singleton, editor, pp. 261–282. University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville.

DuBois, W.E.B.
1970 *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870*. Corner House, Williamstown, MA.

Funari, Pedro Paulo A.
1999 Maroon, Race, and Culture: Palmares Material Culture and Social Relations in a Runaway Settlement. In *Historical Archaeology: Back from the Edge*, Pedro Paulo A. Funari, Martin Hall, and Siân Jones, editors, pp. 308–327. Routledge, London, UK.

Gadsden, James
1937 The Defenses of the Floridas: A Report of Captain James Gadsden, Aide-de-Camp to General Andrew Jackson. *Florida Historical Quarterly* 15(4):242–248.

Giddings, Joshua Reed
1858 *The Exiles of Florida, or the Crimes Committed by our Government against the Maroons, Who Fled from South Carolina and Other Slave States, Seeking Protection under Spanish Laws*. Follett, Foster, and Company, Columbus, OH.

Goggin, John
1939 An Anthropological Reconnaissance of Andros Island, Bahamas. *American Antiquity* 5(1):21–26.

Griffin, John W.
1950 An Archaeologist at Ft. Gadsden. *Florida Historical Quarterly* 26(4):254–261.

Hodder, Ian
2007 Multivocality and Social Archaeology. In *Evaluating Multiple Narratives Beyond Nationalist, Colonialist, Imperialist Archaeologies*, Junko Habu, Clare Fawcett, and John M. Matsunaga, editors, pp. 196–200. Springer, New York, NY.

Holmes, Jack
1965 Two Spanish Expeditions to Southwest Florida, 1783–1793. *Tequesta* 25:97–107.

Howard, Rosalyn
2002 *The Black Seminoles of the Bahamas*. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.
2006 The "Wild Indians of Andros Island": Black Seminole Legacy in the Bahamas. *Journal of Black Studies* 37(2):275–298.

La Rosa Corzo, Gabino
2005 Subsistence of Cimarrones: An Archaeological Study. In *Dialogues in Cuban Archaeology*, L. Antonio Curet, Shannon L. Dawdy, and Gabino La Rosa Corzo, editors, pp. 163–180. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.

Leone, Mark P.
2005 *The Archaeology of Liberty in an American Capital: Excavations in Annapolis*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

Little, Barbara J.
1992 Text, Images, Material Culture. In *Text-Aided Archaeology*, Barbara J. Little, editor, pp. 217–221. CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL.

Loren, Diana D., and Uzi Baram (editors)
2007 Between Art and Artifact. *Historical Archaeology* 41(1).

Matthews, Janet Snyder
1983 *Edge of Wilderness: A Settlement History of Manatee River and Sarasota Bay*. Coastal Press, Sarasota, FL.

McDuffee, Lillie B.
1967 *The Lures of Manatee: A True Story of South Florida's Glamorous Past*. Oliver K. Fletcher, Jr., Bradenton, FL.

Meskell, Lynn (editor)
2009 *Cosmopolitan Archaeologies*. Duke University Press, Durham, NC.

Millett, Nathaniel
2005 Britain's 1814 Occupation of Pensacola and America's Response: An Episode of the War of 1812 in the Southeastern Borderlands. *Florida Historical Quarterly* 84(2):229–255.
2007 Defining Freedom in the Atlantic Borderlands of the Revolutionary Southeast. *Early American Studies* 5(2):367–394.

Orser, Charles E., Jr.
1998 The Archaeology of the African Diaspora. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 27:63–82.

Owsley, Frank L.
1985 Ambrister and Arbuthnot: Adventurers or Martyrs for British Honor? *Journal of the Early Republic* 5(3):289–308.

Poe, Stephen R.
1963 *Archaeological Excavations at Fort Gadsden, Florida*. Florida State University, Department of Anthropology, Notes in Anthropology, No. 8. Tallahassee.

Porter, Kenneth W.
1996 *The Black Seminoles: History of a Freedom-Seeking People*, revised edition. Alcione M. Amos and Thomas P. Senter, editors. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

Price, Richard
2006 On the Miracle of Creolization. In *Afro-Atlantic Dialogues: Anthropology in the Diaspora*, Kevin Yelvington, editor, pp. 113–145. School of American Research Press, Santa Fe, NM.

Rowlands, Michael
1999 Black Identity and Sense of the Past in Brazilian National Culture. In *Historical Archaeology: Back from the Edge*, Pedro Paulo A. Funari, Martin Hall, and Siân Jones, editors, pp. 329–344. Routledge, London, UK.

Saunt, Claudio
1999 *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733–1816*. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY.

Scott, James C.
2009 *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia.* Yale University Press, New Haven, CT.

Sivaramakrishnan, Kalyanakrishnan
2008 Introduction to "Moral Economies, State Spaces, and Categorical Violence." *American Anthropologist* 107(3):321–330.

Smedley, Audrey
2007 *The Concept of Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview*, 3rd edition. Westview Press, Boulder, CO.

Spencer-Wood, Suzanne, and Sherene Baugher
2010 Introduction to the Historical Archaeology of Powered Cultural Landscapes. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 14(4):463–474.

Svekis, Sherry R.
2005 Hidden Histories: A Historical Archaeology Approach to the Tabby House Ruins. Honors thesis, New College of Florida, Sarasota.

Twyman, Bruce E.
1999 *The Black Seminole Legacy and North American Politics, 1693–1845*. Howard University Press, Washington, DC.

United States Topographic Bureau
1818 Plan of Fort Gadsden. Drawer 128, Sheet 9, Engineering Department, U.S. Topographic Bureau, Washington, DC. Manuscript, National Archives, Washington, DC.

Waselkov, Gregory A.
1997 Changing Strategies of Indian Field Location in Early Historic Southeast. *People, Plants and Landscape: Case Studies in Paleoethnobotany*, Kristen Gremillion, editor, pp. 179–194. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.

Weik, Terrance
1997 The Archaeology of Maroon Societies in the Americas: Resistance, Cultural Continuity, and Transformation in the African Diaspora. *Historical Archaeology* 31(2):81–92.
2005 Freedom Fighters on the Florida Frontier. In *Unlocking the Past: Celebrating Historical Archaeology in North America*, Lu Ann De Cunzo and John Jameson, editors, pp. 36–44. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

Weisman, Brent
2007 Nativism, Resistance, and Ethnogenesis of the Florida Seminole Indian Identity. *Historical Archaeology* 41(4):198–212.
2009 The Plantation System of the Florida Seminole Indians and Black Seminoles during the Colonial Period. In *Florida's Working-Class Past: Current Perspectives on Labor, Race, and Gender from Spanish Florida to the New Immigration*, Robert Cassanello and Melanie Shell-Weiss, editors, pp. 136–149. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

White, Cheryl
2010 Kumako: A Place of Convergence for Maroons and Amerindians in Suriname, SA. *Antiquity* 84(324):467–479.

Williams, John Lee
1837 *The Territory of Florida, or Sketches of the Topography, Civil and Natural History of the Country, the Climate, and the Indian Tribes from the First Discovery to the Present Time, with a Map, Views, &c.* A. T. Goodrich, New York, NY. Reprinted 1962 by University of Florida Press, Gainesville.

Wolf, Eric
1982 *Europe and the People without History*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

Young, Hugh
1818 Sketch of the Indian & Negro Towns on the Suwaney River. Manuscript, RG77:L247-94, National Archives, Washington, DC.

Uzi Baram
New College of Florida
Division of Social Sciences
5800 Bay Shore Road
Sarasota, FL 34243