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‘She Refused to Be Left Behind’: The Sinews of Modern Day Trafficking in the Late Illegal US-Brazil Slave Trade, ca. 1860s–1880s

Lloyd Belton 

ABSTRACT

This article explores how the illegal slave trade between the United States and Brazil evolved in the 1860s–1880s into novel forms of captive mobility that closely resemble modern day human trafficking. It does so by examining the experiences of two Black families who were trafficked by an American ‘Confederado’ colonist. Through a close reading of a diverse array of sources, including government records, newspaper correspondence, passenger lists, and rich oral histories, it pushes back against the enslaver narrative in which these families are portrayed as willing travel companions. Instead, it narrates a counter-history that exposes how their enslaver used subterfuge, diversion and coercion to traffic them in plain sight and retain their enslaved labour against the tide of emancipation.

KEYWORDS

Confederate emigration; US Civil War; Brazil; slave trade; human trafficking

In October 1866, the *Jornal do Commercio* reported that John Abraham Cole, a white slaveholder from Mississippi, had arrived at the docks in Rio de Janeiro with a cargo of furniture, cotton seeds and agricultural equipment.¹ Cole had escaped the US South as Union forces marched onto his vast cotton plantations, seizing much of his land and freeing most of his enslaved workers.² Seeking to build anew, he and around 2,000–4,000 other so-called ‘Confederados’ chose to move to Brazil, a country which emigration agents had for decades touted as a land of untapped economic opportunity.³ After the war, Emperor Dom Pedro II started offering long-term loans, cheap land, tax breaks and other incentives to disgruntled Southerners, hoping they would bring their agricultural expertise and revolutionize Brazil’s cotton industry.⁴ The persistence of slavery, which would only be abolished in Brazil in 1888, was of course a key factor for Cole and other *Confederados* in their decision to relocate there.

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While the 1860s had seen a flourishing of unprecedented political activity and growing civil society opposition to slavery in Brazil, it was still legal and abolitionism was only in its infancy.⁵ Before committing to emigrating, Cole and many other white colonists made direct enquiries with Brazilian consuls in the United States to clarify the status of slavery in the country.⁶ Most also inquired into the cost of enslaved labourers and the possibility of taking African Americans with them to oversee and train Brazilian captives on how to pick and process cotton. Even though enslaved labour could be easily and cheaply acquired in Brazil, *Confederados* placed high value on the technical knowledge of cotton production that African Americans possessed.⁷ This was particularly important to Cole who contacted the Brazilian consul in New York to ask if he could emigrate with several of his formerly enslaved workers.

Brazilian emigration agents and consuls in the United States had warned prospective colonists that importing enslaved persons into Brazil from any country was illegal. However, they had been less explicit about whether free persons of colour could immigrate. Cole wanted to take an African American woman and her two daughters, who he claimed were free, to work on the estate that he had purchased near Campinas, São Paulo. However, when he requested Brazilian passports for them to travel, the consul refused on the grounds that Brazil's laws unequivocally prohibited the entry of foreign people of colour at its ports. Cole questioned the consul's decision and, believing it to be misguided, resolved to take the woman and her daughters with him anyway.

Cole's African American travel companions were not listed among the passengers that disembarked at Rio's docks. However, it did not take long for Brazilian authorities to be informed about their presence because the circulation of foreign persons of colour in Brazil was considered an issue of utmost gravity. Cole's actions came under intense scrutiny and any hopes of a quick onward journey to his estate were dashed. Soon, the woman's legal status was being debated at the highest levels of government. The outcome of the case would shape the attitudes of prospective Confederate exiles towards emigrating to Brazil. It would also ultimately force Brazilian authorities to revisit and shore up their existing race-based immigration policies.

Several scholars, including Célio Antônio Alcântara Silva, Isadora Moura Mota, and Wlamyra R. de Albuquerque, have already written about this case and its implications. Focusing primarily on Cole's actions and the high-level government response to them, they demonstrate the growing anxieties over emancipation and racial whitening among Brazilian officials.⁸ Their work forms part of a wider body of literature on the *Confederados* and the hemispheric connections between systems of slavery in the United States and Brazil. Gerald Horne's *The Deepest South* charts the diplomatic relationship between the Confederacy and the Empire of Brazil in the context of the slave

trade and slavery. He contends that Brazil initially fed the hopes of pro-slavery Southerners, but that the experiences, challenges and disillusionment of *Confederados* in Brazil eventually forced them to come to terms with the end of the institution in the United States.⁹ In a similar vein, Luciana da Cruz Brito's analysis of *Confederado* journals has shown that growing anxiety over racial mixing in Brazilian society prompted many colonists to move back to the United States.¹⁰ Silva has undertaken an exhaustive analysis of the social relations between *Confederados* across Brazil, arguing that their colonies proliferated due to intense interest in maintaining slavery combined with Brazilian government encouragement. His work builds on Cyrus and James Dawsey's pioneering study on *Confederado* communities, their impact on Brazilian society, and their enduring legacy in modern Brazil.¹¹ Examining the geopolitical ramifications of the US Civil War on Brazilian society and government policy, Mota argues that 'Confederate migration to Brazil was a logical historical outcome of the hemispheric importance of Atlantic slavery'.¹²

Despite the attention given to the case, there has been little attempt to scrutinize Cole's actions or to uncover the story behind the African American woman and children who accompanied him. Indeed, Cole's claim that they were free has been largely taken at face value. A close examination of the circumstantial evidence and clues in the rich oral history record reveal a more sinister story of deceit, corruption, power and the mobilities of people who were, in fact, captives. Indeed, neither the woman – whose name was Sylvie – nor her daughters were free and both had been enslaved by Cole for most (if not all) of their lives.

Before the US Civil War, Sylvie and her daughters laboured on his cotton plantation in Mississippi.¹³ Despite the Union Army's victory and the Emancipation Proclamation, Cole prolonged their captivity by keeping them at arm's length from freedom. They were taken down the Mississippi River to New Orleans where Cole rendezvoused with other Southerners bound for Brazil via New York. By remaining mobile, Cole perpetuated their captivity. He did so in brazen fashion, taking advantage of some of the uncertainties and ambiguities of the Reconstruction era. When confronted, Cole asserted that Sylvie and her daughters were not enslaved but rather free and loyal servants who followed him willingly. To lend credence to his story, Cole ensured that Sylvie and her daughters travelled in plain sight of other passengers, hoping that by being so conspicuous he would paradoxically avoid suspicion.

The methods Cole employed to traffic Sylvie and her daughters were distinct from the *modus operandi* typically associated with the Atlantic slave trade, and the experiences of these captives aboard prompt us to reconsider conventional understanding of the Middle Passage.¹⁴ Unlike the millions of Africans and people of African descent trafficked in the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the various regional domestic slave trades, they were generally spared the unique horrors of prolonged confinement in wet, cramped and suffocating ship

cargo holds.¹⁵ Indeed, they were not trafficked on ships specifically designed and fitted for human cargo, but rather aboard passenger-carrying vessels in full view of other travellers. To keep Sylvie and his other victims compliant on these long voyages and to avoid being exposed as a trafficker, Cole offered false promises of freedom and economic opportunity. When these did not materialize, he knew that the lack of practical alternatives in a foreign land would render them dependent on him regardless of whether legal frameworks had freed them.

Sylvie and her daughters were not the only family to fall victim to Cole's scheme. In the 1880s, he trafficked a Brazilian family back to the United States. In both instances, Cole's actions demonstrated that anti-slave trade acts, emancipation laws, and other immigration statutes designed to curtail trafficking or restrict the movement of peoples of colour were only partly enforced and could be circumvented with relative ease. This bilateral flow of human cargo continued well beyond the established chronologies of the illegal slave trade with the complicity of corrupt government authorities, immigration and customs officials, and shipping companies.¹⁶

Recovering the stories of Sylvie, her daughters and others who were trafficked by Cole can shed light on the complex transformation of the slave trade in the late nineteenth century and the methods employed by enslavers to prolong captivity as systems of slavery collapsed around them. Doing so requires countering the false narratives about loyalty and dependence pushed by Cole, his descendants and other *Confederados*. It also necessitates confronting the silences and erasures that pervade the historical record. Cole deliberately omitted or misrepresented the names of his victims in passenger records to cover his tracks and deceive officials. When confronted by suspicious onlookers or officials, he spoke on behalf of his victims, stripping them of any agency. In doing so, he suppressed their identities, perspectives, and any record of resistance.

Their stories also contribute to a more nuanced discussion about the relationship between mobility and freedom. In recent years, a strong association between these two concepts has developed in the field of slavery studies, in part influenced by the seminal works of Ira Berlin, Jane Landers and others who have shown how people of African descent used mobility to escape bondage.¹⁷ Others have pushed back against this, reminding us that for the vast majority of Africans and African-descended peoples in the early modern world, mobility, whether on a national or transnational scale, often reinforced or re-established bondage. Rashauna Johnson reframes the migration of Saint Dominguan refugees to New Orleans in the wake of the Haitian Revolution as a project of mass re-enslavement.¹⁸ Further decoupling the relationship between mobility and freedom, Daylet Domínguez, Víctor Goldgel Carballo and other scholars have shown how movement was regularly deployed in Cuba to reinforce enslavement.¹⁹

The captivity experienced by Sylvie, her daughters and others trafficked by Cole was not stationary, experienced only in fixed locales, but rather a process re-created, re-enforced, and prolonged in motion. As systems of slavery were extinguished, first in the United States and then later in Brazil, Cole refused to cede ownership of his bondspersons and used mobility to escape the tide of emancipation. The outcome of the US Civil War had effectively freed Sylvie and her daughters, but Cole reproduced their captivity by trafficking them to another sanctuary for slavery. Later, when he sensed the growing forces of abolitionism in Brazil, he trafficked other captives back to the United States. In doing so, he crafted new frontiers of slavery while on the move. For Sylvie and Cole's other victims, the outcome of this process – hereafter conceived of as 'captive mobility' – was diametrically opposite to the experiences of other enslaved persons who found freedom through oceanic pathways such as the Maritime Underground Railroad.²⁰

Cole was cognizant that the sanctuaries of slavery he created had no legal recognition. He could not re-enslave Sylvie and her daughters in Brazil for their mere presence in the country as foreign persons of colour was illegal. Similarly, he effectively freed the family he trafficked to the United States in the 1880s the moment they disembarked. To overcome legal barriers and pass through checkpoints, Cole claimed that his victims followed him willingly out of loyalty, economic need, and/or fear of being left behind, an argument not unlike that employed by human traffickers today. Thereafter, intense cultural, societal and linguistic dislocation in distant frontier zones ensured that they remained *de facto* enslaved to him.

Structurally, the article is divided into three parts. The first section narrates the sequence of events when Cole immigrated to Brazil, examining his efforts to traffic Sylvie and her daughters, and the subsequent government case file against him. It is then followed by a 'counter-history' of that dominant narrative in which Sylvie's perspective and experiences in Brazil are partially reconstructed by piecing together a fragmented archival and oral history record. The third and final section draws on additional oral history records from the United States, including interviews with Cole's descendants, to shed light on his other victims and to expose his actions as indicative of the broader evolution of the illegal Atlantic slave trade into modern-day human trafficking and slavery.

'The Woman is Said to be Freeborn'²¹

The arc of Sylvie's long journey from slavery to freedom and then back to captivity started on the banks of the Mississippi River. As Union forces closed in on his plantation and organizations like the Freedmen's Bureau threatened to seize enslaved workers, Cole bundled Sylvie and her daughters onto a steamship near Tunica, a town at the heart of the Mississippi's cotton plantation complex. On the long steamboat journey down the river to New Orleans, Sylvie's mind must

have been filled with thoughts of fear and trepidation, but maybe also hope and expectation. Cole always maintained that ‘She refused to be left behind’, a dubious claim which this article contests.²² However, the possibility that Sylvie had actually wanted to leave the South must at least be entertained. During the war, Cole’s plantation had been caught in the firing line of skirmishes between Union and Confederate troops.²³ The violence and destruction witnessed would have had a profound psychological effect on anyone, let alone a woman with two young daughters.²⁴ In a scorched and uncertain post-war landscape, leaving with Cole might have seemed less risky than staying to try and build a new life. It is unlikely, however, that Sylvie was ever told the full truth about where they were going. Had Cole spoken of Brazil, he undoubtedly would have painted a romanticized picture.

When they arrived in New Orleans, Cole rendezvoused with other Southerners bound for Brazil. Agents from the newly formed U.S. and Brazil Mail Shipping Company (USBMSC), a joint venture between the Brazilian government and private interests, had been appointed to assist the migrants. They worked directly with the Brazilian consular officials in the United States and were responsible for checking the visas, passports and other certificates that granted many Confederate exiles free passage to Brazil.²⁵ They had been explicitly warned against allowing any African American passengers aboard the company’s vessels.²⁶ Thus, when Cole tried to take Sylvie and her daughters aboard the *Guiding Star*, the agent initially refused. However, they were eventually allowed to board after Cole agreed to assume all responsibility and promised to pay any expenses incurred should they be denied entry into Brazil and need to return.²⁷

The steam-powered packet ship was commodious. The ‘passenger accommodations are not excelled by those upon any other Steamers in the world’, read one USBMSC advertisement.²⁸ Wealthy passengers like Cole paid large sums of money for luxurious staterooms where Sylvie and her daughters carried out various exhausting domestic duties such as cooking and cleaning. However, they were also allowed to ‘openly’ walk on the upper deck during the day where they engaged with other passengers and crew members.²⁹ This temporary reprieve was part of Cole’s elaborate ruse: his captives needed to act as if they were free for his story to be convincing. However, each night racial barriers were re-imposed, and Sylvie and her daughters were sent below deck to sleep next to agricultural tools, chests of clothes and medicine, barrels of food and other items in the hold.³⁰ This routine continued for the six-week voyage down to Rio. Even if they were allowed on deck during the day, it must have been a harrowing experience for a woman and two young children to be confined to the cargo hold of a ship for that long.

While Cole brazenly paraded Sylvie and her daughters on deck during the voyage, he took great care to conceal their presence when the *Guiding Star* docked in Rio. Their names were omitted from the arriving passenger list

and they were ushered through back doors.³¹ Legislation against the illegal slave trade promulgated in 1831 provided that all ships entering and leaving Brazilian ports were supposed to undergo police inspections, and any enslaved persons encountered were meant to be seized and their importers arrested. However, officials were told to be welcoming towards *Confederados* and spared them the usual customs and passport inspections.³² Unchecked, Sylvie and her daughters were disembarked ‘without obstacle’ and then taken to a safe house in the city.³³

The relative ease with which Cole trafficked Sylvie and her daughters through Rio’s port emboldened him. It must have confirmed, at least in his own mind, that either he was right all along in his interpretation of Brazil’s immigration laws or that lackadaisical enforcement of any ban on African American immigrants rendered them impotent anyway. However, realizing that they required travel documents for their onward journey to Santos, Cole contacted the Brazilian Colonisation Agent in Rio to ask him to ‘remove any obstacles’ he might face. The agent was confounded by this cocksure Southerner who ‘could have taken the woman [Sylvie], by land, to Campinas, where his estates are located, without any police intervention’. Instead, by contacting him, Cole had inadvertently incriminated himself. While the agent attributed Cole’s unwitting confession to a ‘desire to adhere to the laws of his country of adoption’, it is unlikely that Cole had come forward voluntarily. He had intimated as much, telling the agent that he did not want to ‘compromise the Company, which has lent itself to do his will’, a likely indication that someone had reported him and that the USBMSC had forced him to assume responsibility for his actions. Backed into a corner, Cole tried to save face.³⁴

In his communications with the agent, Cole presented a distorted version of events, portraying himself as a responsible colonist determined not to fall on the wrong side of the law. If he had erred in his interpretation of Brazil’s immigration laws, he would set himself at the mercy of government authorities. Cole’s ingratiating account of why he had brought Sylvie and her daughters to Brazil almost convinced the agent who described it as ‘cloaked in all the circumstances of truth’. Still, a sliver of doubt lingered in his mind. After all, Cole had travelled to the country with Sylvie and her daughters despite warnings from the Brazilian consul in New York against doing so. Believing that he could not ‘totally exclude any possibility of malice’ on Cole’s part, the agent confidentially contacted Rio’s Chief of Police who in turn brought the case before the State Council, a high-level committee set up to advise the Emperor. The legal status of Sylvie and her daughters was chief among their concerns.³⁵

In his letter to the Chief of Police, the agent noted that ‘the woman is said to be freeborn’. However, having never actually met Sylvie (who was presumably kept out of sight), his statement on her background and legal status was entirely based on the inaccurate information that Cole fed him. ‘Cole believes it to be

true, but he does not assert it, nor can he prove it', noted the agent with a palpable degree of suspicion. By describing Sylvie as a freeborn woman and at the same time declining to corroborate her story, Cole deflected some of the responsibility for her arrival in Rio. If it was indeed in contravention of Brazil's laws, she would be equally to blame.³⁶

Presenting Sylvie as freeborn and not freed was a calculated move on Cole's part that demonstrated a keen understanding of Brazil's complex legal system. Prior to leaving the United States, he had 'consulted a lawyer' who seemingly pointed out a major loophole in Brazil's immigration laws and constitution.³⁷ The 1831 anti-slave trade law had expressly banned 'any freed man not from Brazil from disembarking at the country's ports under any circumstances'.³⁸ Crucially, however, it made use of the term *liberto* (freed) but not *livre/ingênuo* (freeborn), separate legal categories under the Brazil's nineteenth-century constitution. The law only made specific reference to freed men with no mention of women. Taking advantage of these legal semantics, Cole argued that the law did not apply to Sylvie, a supposedly freeborn woman. 'Many others in the United States that are willing to emigrate to Brazil are under the same assumption', Cole told the agent.³⁹ There was some substance to this claim. Prior to 1866, foreign *ingênuos* had been allowed into Brazil, a fact Cole's lawyer no doubt communicated to him.⁴⁰ However, attitudes towards Black immigration had hardened further after the US Civil War.

Brazilian authorities feared the negative influence emancipation in the United States might have on public order, and were on high alert to prevent any African Americans from disembarking in the country. A year prior to Sylvie's arrival, authorities were on the lookout for Henry Hunter, an African American man from Alabama who had petitioned the Brazilian Consul in New York for a passport but was not cleared to travel. Fearing that he would try to enter the country anyway, the Ministry of Justice ordered Rio's Chief of Police and authorities in all other maritime ports to arrest him if he set foot on Brazilian soil.⁴¹

Determined to discourage any further African American immigration, the State Council decided to make an example of Cole. Within a day of receiving the agent's report, it ruled that Sylvie's arrival was in contravention of the 1831 law. It dismissed any notion that the wording of the law was ambiguous, arguing that the generic term '*homem liberto*' (freed man) clearly included both sexes and that, furthermore, the term '*liberto*' was not intended to refer to enslaved people who had been freed, but was rather as a catchall phrase for any 'any person of colour who is not a slave'. Stressing the importance of the law in its ruling, the State Council reiterated that its fundamental purpose was to 'prevent the growth and prevalence of the African race' and to stop the smuggling of enslaved persons disguised as freed people. That Sylvie was of childbearing age and already had two children likely only added to their concern; her womb was a direct threat to policies of racial whitening.⁴²

The State Council did, however, concede that errors had occurred in communicating the 1831 law overseas. It accepted that the pamphlet distributed by the Brazilian consul in New York – warning prospective immigrants that ‘No slaves can be imported into Brazil from any country whatever [*sic*]’ – had not explicitly addressed the question of free or freed migrants of colour and had ‘induced him [Cole] into [making] the error’. To remedy this, the State Council recommended that the full reach of the law be explained to Brazilian diplomatic representatives in the United States to avoid similar cases. Mistakes aside, however, the State Council urged the Emperor to not let Cole’s actions go unpunished. Preventing the arrival of persons of colour from the United States ‘should weigh much more on the mind of Your Imperial Majesty’ than any sympathy for Cole. ‘Contact with people who have been recently emancipated, and who come from war still with the enthusiasm of victory cannot but be a great conflagration’, it warned. As such, it recommended that Sylvie be immediately ‘re-exported’ back to the United States.⁴³

This ruling would go on to influence imperial decisions in similar cases during the 1860s and 1870s, as Mota and Albuquerque’s work shows.⁴⁴ Several months later, authorities in the northern state of Pará republished the case in full on the front page of a local newspaper, likely as a reminder to the droves of Southerners arriving to establish a new colony on the Amazon River.⁴⁵ Then, in 1877, it was directly cited in a case against a Black British sailor who disembarked in Rio, and later against a group of Brazilian entrepreneurs who wanted to import free African American labourers.

Intriguingly, the State Council’s recommendation made no mention of Sylvie’s daughters, an omission that warrants further discussion. A close reading of the Portuguese language documentation presented to the State Council offers some clues as to why they may have been treated separately. In his report, the agent had described Cole as having ‘muito desejo de trazer em sua companhia uma mulher de côr preta, com suas filhas menores, que há muitos anos estava a seu serviço’ (‘Very desirous to bring in his company a Black woman, with his/her/their young daughters, who has been in his service for many years’).⁴⁶ The ambiguous syntax he used, specifically the positioning of the pronoun ‘suas’, meant that he could have been referring to either ‘his’, ‘her’ or ‘their’ young daughters, opening up the possibility that Cole was in fact the father of the two girls. If true, this might account for why they were not included in the recommendation, and therefore seemingly permitted to stay in Brazil. It also might explain why Cole prioritized trafficking them over all the other bondspersons he previously owned, risking imprisonment and possibly even execution to do so.

Sylvie was likely unaware of the high-level discussions regarding her fate and would not have known that the State Council had effectively separated her from her daughters. Even if she had somehow heard the news, escape was not a realistic option. Cole had her daughters in his possession and could always use

them as leverage to force her to return. He also knew that Sylvie would likely not survive long in an alien society where the customs, language and culture were so different. Regardless, the outcome was moot because Cole never had any intention of sending Sylvie back to the United States.

Sensing that the outcome of the case would be unfavourable, Cole had not even waited for the State Council's decision. Just days after first contacting the Colonisation Agent, Cole took Sylvie and her daughters to Santos by steamer, seemingly unhindered by any of the potential obstacles that had initially concerned him. He had a significant head start because almost four weeks had elapsed between when he first contacted the agent and when his case was heard before the State Council. Thus, by the time it recommended her deportation, Sylvie was beyond the reach of the law.

After they left Rio in early December 1866, all traces of Sylvie and her daughters were deliberately silenced to avoid any further scrutiny. When Cole stopped over at a Campinas hotel, he did not list them among the guests.⁴⁷ Nor would he record them among the enslaved people labouring on his plantation. They were there though, hidden in plain sight. The next section narrates what Stephanie Smallwood has called a 'counter-history', a history accountable to enslaved people.⁴⁸ To do so, it deliberately subverts Cole's version of events and instead focuses on Sylvie and her daughters, drawing on a fragmented archival record, oral histories, and case studies of other enslaved people to, as much as possible, recover their lived experiences in Brazil.

'Tia Sylvie'⁴⁹

Despite losing his land and most of his enslaved workers in Mississippi during the Civil War, Cole still retained significant material wealth in the form of gold bullion, which he used to purchase large tracts of land in Santa Bárbara, a growing *Confederado* settlement of around 800 colonists near Campinas.⁵⁰ There, he sowed several hundred hectares of cotton, corn and coffee with the agricultural equipment and seeds that he had imported into Brazil. Within two years he started exporting cotton back to the United States. Brazilian observers were full of praise for him and other *Confederado* landowners. 'The system of agricultural work in Santa Bárbara has been completely freed from old habits', noted the editor of the *Correio Paulistano*, adding 'these American farmers rely on the use of machines for their work [...] tripling their activity and perfection by way of instruments used little by us [Brazilians]'.⁵¹ Even noted engineer, inventor and one of the future leaders of the country's abolitionist movement, André Rebouças, spoke highly of 'industrious Americans' like Cole whose use of the plough had significantly increased corn crop yields.⁵² Proud US newspaper editors also chimed in, claiming that 'The small settlement of Americans at Santa Bárbara, in S. Paulo, is likely to be of

great service to the railway and province by the stimulus their efforts and example are giving to production'.⁵³

While Brazilian and US observers gushed about *Confederado* agricultural productivity, few acknowledged that the colonists continued to depend on enslaved labour. In his study on Santa Bárbara, Silva found evidence of over 200 enslaved labourers on *Confederado* estates.⁵⁴ Cole held more people in bondage than any other landowner in the area and was one of the wealthiest residents in the town. His home was the *de facto* centre of the community where colonists convened meetings and where the local pastor preached every Sunday.⁵⁵ 'Auntie Sylvie' or 'Tia Sylvie', as many called her, was well known in the community.⁵⁶ Her title, though seemingly respectful and familial, belied her actual treatment. To Cole and other *Confederado* families, Sylvie was the 'Mammy', a stereotype of a Black woman whose purpose and life was believed to revolve entirely around taking care of the white man and his family and who was almost always satisfied with not being free. When asked about her presence, Cole told others that Sylvie was not his captive but rather a loyal member of the family who had willingly accompanied him to Brazil.⁵⁷

Sylvie and her daughters were not the only African Americans held in slavery in Santa Bárbara, as is revealed in the community's rich, albeit distorted oral history record. William Hutchinson Norris, a former US senator and founder of the Santa Bárbara colony, trafficked a young woman called 'Olímpia', who also allegedly 'preferred to come with him rather than rebuild her life from scratch in Alabama'.⁵⁸ There were others but their names and stories have since been lost.⁵⁹ The majority of enslaved labourers in Santa Bárbara were Brazilian. Many had come with the properties that Cole had purchased, although he very quickly acquired additional labourers. In September 1868, he purchased Benedito, a 28-year-old '*crioulo*' from the northeastern state Alagoas.⁶⁰ He later also purchased Ereah, a woman whose parents had been trafficked from West Africa.⁶¹

Initially, the *Confederados* found Brazilian captives amenable. In 1868, Julia Keyes, the daughter of a *Confederado* colonist living in Rio, wrote: 'The negroes here are more humble and respectful than in the States'.⁶² Less than a year later though, she told relatives in the United States that, 'We find very little difference between the negroes here and those in the States except in the amount of work they seem able to do – One American house servant will accomplish more than twice as much without trying'.⁶³

Refusing to tolerate the work 'rhythm' that their new foreign enslavers sought to establish, enslaved Brazilian labourers in Santa Bárbara soon began to escape to São Paulo and other nearby towns.⁶⁴ Less than four months after Cole had purchased him, Benedito self-liberated with an enslaved boy called Joaquim. Eager to reclaim his property, Cole paid for a newspaper advert in the *Diário de São Paulo*, offering a large reward for their

apprehension.⁶⁵ Poor treatment was the principal reason enslaved workers fled from Cole and other *Confederado* enslavers. The colonists were generally neglectful of their health and employed excessive violence against them. In August 1868, a 22-year-old enslaved man called João, described as ‘always sick, with swollen feet, a rotten front tooth, and a pale face’, escaped from Thomas McKnight’s property in Santa Bárbara.⁶⁶ Cole’s treatment of his enslaved labourers was so heinous that 100 years later subsequent generations of *Confederados* still recalled that he ‘was not very good towards his slaves’.⁶⁷ Given this history of violence, Sylvie likely bore the brunt of Cole’s rage and frustrations as enslaved Brazilian labourers continued to self-liberate. Up until that point, she had presumably been spared the backbreaking work endured by Brazilian field hands, benefitting from certain privileges and comforts as the ‘Mammy’ figure in Cole’s home. However, as the estate faced a potential shortage of labourers, Sylvie and her daughters would have also been expected to toil in the fields, in addition to their already burdensome domestic and childcare tasks.

Conditions were difficult and white colonists constantly complained about the tropical climate and mosquito-borne diseases such as yellow fever. Illness sometimes decimated entire families, forcing them to abandon their settlements and move to larger towns and cities such as Rio and São Paulo.⁶⁸ In Santa Bárbara, persistent downpours destroyed the thatched roofs of the houses, creating unsafe living conditions. Cole was often heard complaining that ‘It’s chuvering [raining] like hell’.⁶⁹ Fed up, some white women in the community ‘pressed their husbands and brothers to return to the United States’.⁷⁰ Initially, Cole ignored their pleas and doubled down, determined to make his Brazilian venture work. For Sylvie and her daughters this likely meant picking up much of the domestic work done by the wives and daughters of white colonists who were prostrated by fever. White enslavers across the Atlantic world erroneously believed that Black people had natural immunity to diseases like yellow fever and used this to justify racial slavery.⁷¹ Clearly, however, descriptions of enslaved workers in Santa Bárbara as ‘always sick’ discredited this claim. Like Brazilian bondspersons, Sylvie and her daughters must have also suffered from the heat, humidity and disease.

In the plantation fields, Cole would have relied on Sylvie to instruct other enslaved labourers on how to pick and process cotton, the estate’s primary crop.⁷² Enslaved Brazilian labourers were taught some English and Sylvie and her daughters would have also picked up Portuguese words and phrases.⁷³ They likely shared their stories of hardship on Cole’s plantation. Perhaps Sylvie, Olímpia and other African Americans were asked about the Civil War and emancipation in the United States, a salient topic among enslaved people in Brazil.⁷⁴ These were precisely the type of hemispheric conversations between enslaved peoples that Brazil’s strict race-based immigration laws tried to prevent.

Generally, however, relations between African American and Brazilian enslaved persons must have been difficult, owing to vast language and cultural barriers. Because of this, Sylvie and her daughters may have experienced severe social isolation and remained entirely dependent on Cole and his family. Escaping like the other enslaved labourers was not an option for they had no networks of support on which to rely if they self-liberated. An English-speaking Black woman and her daughters would have stood out a mile. With little prospect of survival outside of Santa Bárbara, Sylvie and her daughters endured.

'They Were What You Might Call Slaves'⁷⁵

After investing in the land for 16 years for little profit, Cole eventually left Brazil in late 1882 and returned to the United States. It was a decision strongly motivated by the gathering momentum of abolitionism in the country. Emancipation had freed most of his captives in Mississippi, and fearing that history would repeat itself in Brazil, he chose to once again to traffic some of his enslaved labourers across the Atlantic before they obtained freedom. 'The colonel [Cole] had two loyal servants [...] who could not be expected to fare so well once the Americans were gone', recalled Cole's descendants, so he 'took them along'.⁷⁶

Sylvie and her daughters were not among those on the long voyage back to the United States. Instead, Cole took two enslaved Brazilian labourers, Benedict and Ereah, along with their five-year-old freeborn son Fino.⁷⁷ Like Sylvie and her daughters, this family was also trafficked in plain sight.⁷⁸ They were regularly allowed out of the ship's hold to walk on deck and engage with other passengers. When a group of *Confederado* returnees complained about listless days in the doldrums, Benedict and Ereah offered a terse response. 'No blow, no go', they explained, probably drawing on their prior experiences of being trafficked aboard slave trading vessels along the north Brazilian coast.⁷⁹ However, any liberty they enjoyed aboard ended in the hours before their vessel docked in Baltimore. Cole made sure they were whisked away and hidden, and customs officials in Baltimore also turned a blind eye.

As he had done with Sylvie, Cole employed a mix of deception and coercion to ensure that Benedict and Ereah remained compliant. He promised them freedom and land, and probably also told them lies about opportunities of economic and even social uplift waiting for them in the United States. Like many other enslaved people in Brazil, Benedict and Ereah were probably aware that the Civil War had destroyed slavery in the United States. However, it is doubtful that they had a detailed understanding of the intricacies of Reconstruction politics and the enduring racial divide in both the North and South. Cole may have taken advantage of their ignorance to trick them into believing that there were greater opportunities for Black people in the post-war United States than in Brazil. If at any point they expressed doubts or opposition, Cole could have

always resorted to more coercive methods of ensuring compliance, such as threatening to separate them from their son.

Of course, none of this was of course recorded in Cole's own version of events. According to him, Benedict and Ereah were willing travel companions who 'decided to follow their benefactors', a tall tale just as improbable as his claim that Sylvie had 'refused to be left behind'.⁸⁰ He justified his decision to traffic them as an act of charity. Cole told his descendants that 'The families thought a lot of them and did not want to see them in want when they left'. Ever self-assured, Cole claimed to have 'a plan in mind for helping the two new additions to the band of adventurers' once they arrived in the United States.⁸¹ Cole's story, as recounted by his grandson Payton Liddell in the 1950s, is littered with tropes of adventure and white benevolence. In it, he cuts the figure of the daring leader always preoccupied with the wellbeing of others. Occasionally, however, cracks appear in this otherwise distorted oral history. When pushed by the journalist who interviewed him, Liddell, who was raised by Benedict and Ereah, was forced to acknowledge the obvious truth: 'They were what you might call slaves'.⁸²

Cole never had any intention of relinquishing control over them even though they had been *de jure* freed the moment they set foot on US soil. He ensured that they remained bonded to him as he crisscrossed the country in search of economic opportunities. From Baltimore, Cole and other *Confederado* returnees travelled to New York, and then to Tennessee, before finally settling in Florida where they founded a settlement called 'Santos' in honour of their Brazilian sojourn. Like Santa Bárbara, the Floridian Santos was surrounded by 'a large unexplored wilderness'. '[A] little nostalgic for their earlier venture', Cole and others tried to recreate their lives in Brazil. Ensuring a supply of unfree labour was part of this dream.⁸³

'The servants', as they now called Benedict and Ereah, helped raise Cole's grandchildren while also working on his orange grove farm.⁸⁴ Their condition of *de facto* slavery continued long after Cole's death in 1889, even though explicit provisions were made for their independence. Cole left a detailed will in which he bequeathed 'Benedict Cole and Erea[h] Cole, his wife, – they being my former slaves from Brazil, South America, ten acres of land', along with furniture, two cows, farming equipment, and five hundred dollars 'to buy him [Benedict] a home'.⁸⁵ The property, cash and machinery would have been enough to help them escape the Cole family's grasp and start anew. Unfortunately, they likely never received any of it. J.M. Liddell, Cole's son-in-law and executor of the will, was given full power to dispose of all real estate whenever he saw fit, and seemingly took his time to do so. More than ten years later, Benedict and Ereah had not been granted any of what was promised to them, and were still living with Cole's descendants for whom they worked as labourers.⁸⁶

Benedict, Ereah, Fino and their descendants remained economically dependent on Cole's family for decades, a fate that Sylvie likely shared. After he

returned to the United States in 1882, Cole apparently spoke little of Sylvie or her daughters for they are absent in Liddell's accounts. It is unclear if they were even still alive at that time as their names are missing in the extant Brazilian death records. However, enduring collective memory of Sylvie in *Confederado* oral histories in Santa Bárbara would suggest that she remained in the community long after Cole moved back to the United States. Indeed, up until the 1960s, *Confederado* descendants in Santa Bárbara still recounted stories of 'Tia Sylvie' who had 'come with the family of John Cole'.⁸⁷

If they were still alive, it begs the question of whether Cole intentionally left them behind or if they chose to stay. Either way, they would have been freed by the 1888 so-called Golden Law of general emancipation. Cole had left large tracts of land behind in Brazil, some of which may have been promised to them. However, the white colonists in Santa Bárbara would have almost certainly ensured that they never received it. Later, Cole's descendants in the United States tried to recoup his 'belongings' in Santa Bárbara, thus ending any claim Sylvie or her daughters could have had.⁸⁸ Without land of their own and having had very little contact with the outside world for decades, they would have remained entirely dependent on the Santa Bárbara *Confederado* community – much like Benedict and Ereh in Florida. Other African American women in Santa Bárbara, such as Olímpia, lived out their long lives serving various white *Confederado* families in and around São Paulo.⁸⁹

The remarkable parallels between the stories of Sylvie and her daughters, and that of Benedict, Ereh and Fino should come as no surprise. Both families were victims of Cole's elaborate ploy to use mobility and deracination as a means to prolong servitude. They were within freedom's reach before being trafficked away to a foreign country where they experienced intense social, cultural and linguistic alienation. Any resistance they may have presented along the way was concealed in Cole's distorted narratives. For instance, it will never be known if Benedict and Ereh fought back or if Sylvie ever warned them against going with Cole (or at least tried to provide a more accurate picture of Black life in the United States).

According to Cole, Black people like Sylvie, Benedict and Ereh were obedient servants who followed their adventurous white masters to the ends of the Earth. He convinced all those around him that they had chosen loyalty over freedom because liberty itself engendered far more uncertainty than mobility. Cole claimed that mobility was necessary for their wellbeing, and he used this line of reasoning to convince his victims to follow him, resorting to coercion if they expressed any doubts or resisted. He took advantage of their vulnerabilities and political uncertainties. A lone woman with children like Sylvie could have easily been persuaded that following Cole to Brazil offered better prospects than remaining in Mississippi where the widespread destruction of the Civil War had rendered conditions unliveable.

Cole's subterfuge was not unlike that employed by human traffickers today. Like them, he also relied on a ploy of smoke and mirrors to instil a false sense of normality on the vessels on which he smuggled his victims. He concocted stories of dependence and loyalty to rebuff any pointed questions from suspicious onlookers about the legal status of Sylvie and her daughters. He allowed them to interact with free passengers as the traditional physical and social boundaries of the slave ship were momentarily suspended, creating an ambiguous, interstitial space between freedom and servitude that sowed confusion and helped conceal his actions.⁹⁰ Later, he employed the same *modus operandi* to smuggle Benedict, Ereah and Fino back to the United States, targeting them because they were economically vulnerable and also trafficking them in plain sight.

Conclusion

The experiences of Sylvie and Cole's other victims reveal how the illegal slave trade evolved into other forms of captive mobility in the late nineteenth century. Their stories also elucidate some of the continuities and discontinuities between historical and modern slavery, allowing us to move away from the paradigm of total and permanent ownership towards understanding slavery as a continuum of experiences. The familiar juxtaposition between slavery and freedom is unhelpful in this regard because the enslavement of Sylvie, her daughters, Benedict, Ereah and Fino did not rest on their legal status.

As scholars of modern slavery have shown, human bondage did not end with the legal abolition of slavery. Joel Quirk has argued that legal abolition was only a cautious first step, a tentative and highly-qualified process which was not uniformly rolled out by governments, and which was sternly resisted by former enslavers intent on re-establishing, as far as possible, the *status quo ante*. Instead of disappearing, human bondage evolved into forced labour, domestic servitude, sex trafficking, child soldiering, and myriad other forms of captivity that shared analogous practices and institutions with Atlantic slavery. After legal abolition, the opportunities for formerly enslaved people were restricted by larger forces such as institutional regimes, the (mal)distribution of resources, and established patterns of behaviour. In this stark new reality, many formerly-enslaved people faced a difficult decision: sever all ties with their previous life or endure established relationships, however exploitative. Remaining with their former enslaver involved some degree of voluntary consent, although as Quirk acknowledges, this was often invalidated because it was obtained through deception. The lack of practical alternatives also meant that theirs was little more than a Hobson's choice.⁹¹

Cole always claimed that his victims accompanied him willingly, a distorted assertion but one which may have contained some grain of truth. However, this should not be mistaken for consent for it was obtained deceitfully: Sylvie, her

daughters, Benedict, Ereah and Fino were never fully cognizant of Cole's intentions or plans. Following Cole to an unknown destination was the only practical option for Sylvie who likely saw little future for her daughters in the war-torn South. Yet, even if Sylvie had agreed to leave Cole's plantation in Mississippi, consent at one singular point must not be equated with the distorted image that Cole conveyed of a willing travel companion and loyal servant.⁹² Cole hid behind this façade, and racialised and gendered societal ideologies of consent reinforced it.

In her study on rape and sexual power in early America, Sharon Block shows how sexual relations were not defined by a binary of consent or coercion, but rather a continuum of coerced and consensual sexual interactions. She argues that the identities and relationships of the participants, and not the presence or absence of consent itself, most often defined whether an act of sexual violence was considered rape. An early American belief in Black men's proclivity to rape meant that they were disproportionately prosecuted compared to white male defendants who often successfully blurred the lines between sexual coercion and consent. Meanwhile, Black women were virtually barred from seeking redress in the courts because white women were seen as the only regular, legitimate victims of sexual attacks.⁹³ The relationship of dependency between Cole and Sylvie, which in all likelihood involved sexual violence, was judged according to the same cultural and social constructs. Cole claimed that she consented to travel with and work for him, and few would have believed otherwise. It was unthinkable that a lone, vulnerable Black woman with two young children would refuse the apparent generosity of a white benefactor.

Migration further obfuscated and rendered irrelevant any distinction between consent and coercion, a fact that Cole knew all too well. As he took Sylvie and his other victims further and further from their familiar cultural, social, linguistic and geographic landscapes, it became increasingly difficult for them to retract consent and largely meaningless if they did. Sylvie could not appeal to Brazilian authorities for aid for fear of incriminating herself. Cole had deliberately portrayed her as a consensual party to his illegal act of immigration to both absolve himself and bind Sylvie to him. In any event, such recourse was soon out of reach. In frontier zones like Santa Bárbara and Florida, the rule of law was weak, allowing Cole to create new refuges for slavery where *de jure* freedom had little meaning for their day-to-day lives. In this way, mobility did not produce liberty, but rather re-enforced and perpetuated their captivity.

These captive mobilities were enabled by a clandestine network of smugglers, corrupt port officials and other complicit authorities. Cole exploited legal loopholes and poor enforcement of laws which enshrined or granted liberty, expressly forbid transnational trafficking, and/or proscribed the mere presence of people like Sylvie. In helping to traffic these men, women and children, ship captains sometimes did not even bother concealing their criminal actions. For

instance, the captain of the vessel that trafficked Benedict, Ereah and Fino to the United States was so confident that he would escape prosecution that he listed them as 'storage' rather than as cabin passengers, an act which should have otherwise raised serious suspicion from customs officials.⁹⁴

This brazen disregard for long standing anti-slave trading laws and for human life continued well into the 1880s, far later than is generally recognized in the literature on the illegal slave trade. The methods employed by enslavers changed and evolved. Instead of using cargo vessels designed and fitted specifically for the Atlantic slave trade, they relied on passenger carrying vessels to conceal their captives. It is almost impossible to quantify how many Africans or African-descended peoples were trafficked in this way because their names were typically omitted in customs declarations or listed among other paying passengers. Further study is required to understand how they experienced life aboard these vessels and how it differed from what we usually associate with the Middle Passage or domestic slave trading.⁹⁵

As this article has shown, it is possible to reimagine these experiences and to partially recover the perspectives and voices of the enslaved, even with severely limited traditional archival sources. To support this, historians of Atlantic slavery can draw on the work of scholars of contemporary slavery who have worked diligently to reveal the first-hand experiences of human trafficking victims.⁹⁶ Borrowing from their vernacular on the spectrum of unfree labour can help better understand the experiences of Sylvie and others who were trafficked during a critical period of transition towards widespread abolition.

Notes

1. 'Entradas', *Jornal do Commercio* (Rio de Janeiro), October 27, 1866.
2. 'Santos Pioneers Saw Dreams Rise, Then Fall, with Canal Plans', *Florida Times Union* (Jacksonville, FL), n.d. (ca. 1958).
3. Cyrus B. Dawsey and James M. Dawsey, eds., *The Confederados: Old South Immigrants in Brazil* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1998); Célio Antônio Alcântara Silva, 'Confederates and Yankees under the Southern Cross', *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 34, no. 3 (2015): 370–84.
4. 'Confederate War Exiles in Brazil', *Civil War Times Illustrated* 15, no. 9 (1977): 22–32.
5. Angela Alonso, *Flores, Votos e Balas: O Movimento Abolicionista Brasileiro (1868–88)* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2015).
6. In his study on Confederate emigration to Brazil, Silva shows that over 74 percent of the Southerners who sent letters to Brazilian consulates enquiring about emigration were slaveholders. See Silva, 'Confederates and Yankees'.
7. Silva, 'Confederates and Yankees'; 'Para atender', *Folha da Manhã* (São Paulo), December 23, 1956; Gerald Horne, *The Deepest South: The United States, Brazil and the African Slave Trade* (New York: NYU Press, 2007), 222.
8. Célio Antônio Alcântara Silva, 'Capitalismo e Escravidão: A Imigração Confederada para o Brasil' (PhD diss., Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 2011); Isadora Moura Mota, 'On the Imminence of Emancipation: Black Geopolitical Literacy and Anglo-

- American Abolitionism in Nineteenth-Century Brazil' (PhD diss., Brown University, 2017); Wlamyra R. de Albuquerque, *O Jogo da Dissimulação: Abolição, Raça e Cidadania no Brasil* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2009).
9. Horne, *The Deepest South*.
 10. Luciana da Cruz Brito, 'Um paraíso escravista na América do Sul: raça e escravidão sob o olhar de imigrantes confederados no Brasil oitocentista', *Revista de História Comparada* 9, no. 1 (2015): 145–73.
 11. Dawsey and Dawsey, *The Confederados*.
 12. Mota, 'On the Imminence of Emancipation', 212.
 13. 'J.A. Cole', National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), United States Census (Slave Schedule), 1860, Tunica (Mississippi), f. 8, www.familysearch.org (accessed July 19, 2022).
 14. For a comprehensive account of the Middle Passage, see Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (London: Penguin Books, 2008). Scholars have expanded on the concept of 'Middle Passage' from its strict reference to the Africa-to-Americas segment of the triangular trade to include other trajectories of forced migration. For instance, Richard Graham calls the internal slave trade in Brazil 'Another Middle Passage'. See Richard Graham, 'Another Middle Passage? The Internal Slave Trade in Brazil', in *The Chattel Principle: Internal Slave Trades in the Americas*, ed. Walter Johnson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004).
 15. See Rediker, *The Slave Ship*.
 16. Generally, scholars consider 1831–1850 as the era of the contraband slave trade to Brazil. See Jeffrey Needell, 'The Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade in 1850: Historiography, Slave Agency and Statesmanship', *Journal of Latin American Studies* 33, no. 4 (2001): 681–711. Recent studies by Leonardo Marques and John Harris have extended the chronology of United States involvement in the illegal slave trade to 1867. See Leonardo Marques, *The United States and the Transatlantic Slave Trade to the Americas, 1776–1867* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016); John Harris, *The Last Slave Ships: New York and the End of the Middle Passage* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020).
 17. Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); Jane G. Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011); Rebecca J. Scott and Jean M. Hébrard, *Freedom Papers: An Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).
 18. Rashauna Johnson, *Slavery's Metropolis: Unfree Labor in New Orleans During the Age of Revolutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
 19. Daylet Domínguez and Víctor Goldgel Carballo, 'Slavery, Mobility, and Networks in Nineteenth-Century Cuba', *Atlantic Studies* 18, no. 1 (2021): 1–6.
 20. See for example Timothy D. Walker, *Sailing to Freedom: Maritime Dimensions of the Underground Railroad* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2021); David S. Cecelski, 'The Shores of Freedom: The Maritime Underground Railroad in North Carolina, 1800–1861', *The North Carolina Historical Review* 71, no. 2 (1994): 174–206.
 21. 'Parecer sobre a emigração do norte americano J.A. Cole, trazendo uma mulher preta com filhos', Arquivo Nacional do Rio de Janeiro (ANRJ), Conselho de Estado (CdE), Caixa 591, Pacote 2, doc. 41, f. 2v; note that the title of this case file erroneously refers to 'filhos' (sons or a collective of male and female children) whereas the documentation contained within clearly states 'filhas' (daughters).
 22. 'Confederate War Exiles in Brazil', *Civil War Times Illustrated* 15, no. 9 (1977): 30.

23. 'Santos Pioneers', *Florida Times Union*, n.d.
24. Olímpia, an enslaved woman trafficked from Alabama to Brazil, showed clear signs of shell shock due to the US Civil War. Explosions and artillery fire evoked almost instinctive and cathartic expletives that later formed part of her vocabulary, like a tic. See Rita Lee, *Rita Lee – Uma Autobiografia* (São Paulo: Globos Livros, 2016), 84–85.
25. Blanche Henry Clark Weaver, 'Confederate Emigration to Brazil', *The Journal of Southern History* 27, no. 1 (1961): 33–53.
26. Mota, 'On the Imminence of Emancipation', 189.
27. 'Parecer sobre a emigração do norte americano J.A. Cole', ANRJ, CdE, Caixa 591, Pacote 2, doc. 41, f. 2v.
28. 'New York Mail Steamship Co's Line of Side-Wheel Steamers to New Orleans direct', *New York Tribune*, January 7, 1865.
29. 'Parecer sobre a emigração do norte americano J.A. Cole', ANRJ, CdE, Caixa 591, Pacote 2, doc. 41, f. 2v.
30. While there is no surviving account of where exactly Sylvie and her daughters were lodged in the vessel, it is reasonable to assume that they were subject to similar treatment as Cole's other victims who were trafficked in the cargo hold of a ship on his return journey to the United States in 1882 (as discussed later in this article).
31. 'Entradas', *Jornal do Commercio* (Rio de Janeiro), October 27, 1866.
32. Horne, *The Deepest South*, 212; 'Confederate War Exiles in Brazil', *Civil War Times Illustrated* 15, no. 9 (1977): 22–32.
33. 'Parecer sobre a emigração do norte americano J.A. Cole', ANRJ, CdE, Caixa 591, Pacote 2, doc. 41, f. 2v.
34. ANRJ, CdE, Caixa 591, Pacote 2, doc. 41, f. 2v.
35. ANRJ, CdE, Caixa 591, Pacote 2, doc. 41, f. 2v.
36. ANRJ, CdE, Caixa 591, Pacote 2, doc. 41, f. 2v.
37. ANRJ, CdE, Caixa 591, Pacote 2, doc. 41, f. 2v.
38. Câmara dos Deputados, 'Lei de 7 de novembro de 1831', Legislação, https://www2.camara.leg.br/legin/fed/lei_sn/1824-1899/lei-37659-7-novembro-1831-564776-publicacaooriginal-88704-pl.html (accessed August 20, 2022).
39. 'Parecer sobre a emigração do norte americano J.A. Cole', ANRJ, CdE, Caixa 591, Pacote 2, doc. 41, f. 2v.
40. Sidney Chalhoub, *A força da escravidão: Ilegalidade e costume no Brasil oitocentista* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2012).
41. Mota, 'On the Imminence of Emancipation', 190.
42. 'Parecer sobre a emigração do norte americano J.A. Cole', ANRJ, CdE, Caixa 591, Pacote 2, doc. 41, f. 3v.
43. ANRJ, CdE, Caixa 591, Pacote 2, doc. 41, f. 4.
44. See Mota, 'On the Imminence of Emancipation', 217–20; Albuquerque, *O Jogo da Dissimulação*, 73–74.
45. 'Parte Oficial', *Jornal do Pará* (Belém), April 11, 1867.
46. 'Parecer sobre a emigração do norte americano J.A. Cole', ANRJ, CdE, Caixa 591, Pacote 2, doc. 41, f. 4.
47. 'Emigrantes', *Correio Paulistano* (São Paulo), November 11, 1866.
48. Stephanie E. Smallwood, 'The Politics of the Archive and History's Accountability to the Enslaved', *History of the Present* 6, no. 2 (2016): 117–32.
49. 'Para atender', *Folha da Manhã*, December 23, 1956.
50. Judith MacKnight Jones, *Soldado descansa! Uma epopéia norte-americana sob os céus do Brasil* (São Paulo: Jarde, 1967), 203; today the town is known as 'Santa Bárbara d'Oeste'.

51. 'De como a liberdade nobilita o trabalho', *Correio Paulistano*, November 27, 1869.
52. 'Aos agricultores', *Correio Paulistano*, October 16, 1868.
53. 'American Colonists', *New York Herald*, November 3, 1868.
54. Silva, 'Confederates and Yankees'.
55. MacKnight Jones, *Soldado descansa!*
56. 'Para atender', *Folha da Manhã*, December 23, 1956.
57. 'Confederate War Exiles in Brazil', *Civil War Times Illustrated* 15, no. 9 (1977): 22–32; Marie Rodet's work on forced labour in early twentieth-century French West Africa provides a useful point of reference on how enslavers retained and moved juvenile and female captives after abolition by claiming fictive kinship. See Marie Rodet, "'Under the Guise of Guardianship and Marriage": Mobilising Juvenile and Female Labor in the Aftermath of Slavery in Kayes, French Soudan, 1900–1939', in *Trafficking in Slavery's Wake: Law and the Experience of Women and Children in Africa*, ed. Benjamin N. Lawrance and Richard L. Roberts (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2012), 81–92.
58. Rita Lee, the Brazilian musician and descendant of Santa Bárbara *Confederados*, recounts her conversations with Olympia in her autobiography. See Lee, *Rita Lee*, 84–85.
59. Journalist Frank Goldman carried out extensive interviews with Santa Bárbara residents in the 1950s and suspected that there might have been various African Americans in the community in the nineteenth century. See 'Para atender', *Folha da Manhã*, December 23, 1956.
60. Célio Antônio Alcântara Silva, 'Quando Mundos Colidem: A Imigração Confederada para o Brasil (1865–1932) (master's thesis, UNICAMP, 2007), 101.
61. '1920 United States Federal Census', NARA, Marion, Florida, Roll T625_226, f. 7b, www.ancestry.com (accessed 20 July 2022).
62. 'Letter to Cousin Mary, from Pau Grande – Raiz de Serra, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, December 30, 1868', The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections (UALSC), Keyes Family Papers, f. 4, https://cdm17336.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/u0003_0000813/id/1635 (accessed September 1, 2022).
63. 'Confederate War Exiles in Brazil', *Civil War Times Illustrated* 15, no. 9 (1977): 22–32.
64. 'Para atender', *Folha da Manhã*, December 23, 1956.
65. 'Escravos Fugidos', *Diário de São Paulo*, January 31, 1869.
66. 'Escravo fugido', *Correio Paulistano*, September 12, 1868.
67. MacKnight Jones, *Soldado descansa!*, 203.
68. Dawsey and Dawsey, *The Confederados*, 61; 'Letter to dear cousin from Eula, Dixie Island, Brazil, August 15, 1868', UALSC, Keyes Family Papers, f. 2, https://cdm17336.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/u0003_0000813/id/739/rec/29 (accessed 31 July 2022).
69. MacKnight Jones, *Soldado descansa!*, 226.
70. 'Santos Pioneers', *Florida Times Union*, n.d.
71. For a more detailed study of the long-standing belief in Black immunity to certain diseases, see Kathryn Olivarius, *Necropolis: Disease, Power, and Capitalism in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2022).
72. 'Para atender', *Folha da Manhã*, December 23, 1956, 3; MacKnight Jones, *Soldado descansa!*, 226.
73. 'Escravos Fugidos', *Diário de São Paulo*, January 31, 1869, 4.
74. Isadora Moura Mota, 'Other Geographies of Struggle: Afro-Brazilians and the American Civil War', *Hispanic American Historical Review* 100, no. 1 (2020): 35–62.
75. 'Santos Pioneers', *Florida Times Union*, n.d.

76. *Florida Times Union*, n.d.
77. This was not the same 'Benedito' who self-liberated from Cole's plantation in 1869.
78. 'Gamaliel', NARA, US Passenger Lists (1820–1964), Baltimore, Maryland, September 12, 1882, www.ancestry.com (accessed July 12, 2022).
79. 'Santos Pioneers', *Florida Times Union*, n.d.
80. *Ibid.*; 'Confederate War Exiles in Brazil', *Civil War Times Illustrated* 15, no. 9 (1977): 30.
81. 'Santos Pioneers', *Florida Times Union*, n.d.
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86. '1900 United States Federal Census', NARA, Marion, Florida, Roll 174, f. 5b, www.ancestry.com (accessed July 20, 2022). For further background reading on the founding of Santos, Florida, and the Cole family's position in the community, see Blue Nelson, 'Structural Racism and the Destruction of Santos, Florida', *African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter* 14, no. 2 (2011): 1–12.
87. 'Para atender', *Folha da Manhã*, December 23, 1956.
88. MacKnight Jones, *Soldado descansa!*, 391.
89. Lee, *Rita Lee*, 84–85.
90. Thomas Buchanan's study on slavery in the Mississippi River basin provides one of the few points of reference on the unique social dynamics between enslaved and free travellers aboard passenger-carrying steamboats. See Thomas C. Buchanan, *Black Life on the Mississippi: Slaves, Free Blacks and the Western Steamboat World* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004).
91. Joel Quirk, *The Anti-Slavery Project: From the Slave Trade to Human Trafficking* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011). Other key studies linking Atlantic slavery and the slave trade to contemporary trafficking and slavery include Lawrance and Roberts, ed., *Trafficking in Slavery's Wake*; Robin Phylisia Chapdelaine, *The Persistence of Slavery: An Economic History of Child Trafficking in Nigeria* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2021); and, Emma Christopher, Cassandra Pybus and Marcus Rediker, *Many Middle Passages: Forced Migration and the Making of the Modern World* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007).
92. In her study on the trafficking of women and children across the China Sea in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Julia Martínez demonstrates how the distinction between free will and coercion is difficult when a woman's journey begins with some degree of consent yet ends in brutal and demeaning slavery. See Julia Martínez, 'La Traite des Jaunes: Trafficking in Women and Children across the China Sea', in *Many Middle Passages*, 204–21.
93. Sharon Block, *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012).
94. 'Gamaliel', NARA, US Passenger Lists (1820–1964), Baltimore, Maryland, September 12, 1882, www.ancestry.com (accessed July 12, 2022).
95. There is a limited body of scholarship on the lived experiences of enslaved people who were sold in domestic slave trades, much of which focuses on Brazil. See, for example, Graham, 'Another Middle Passage?' and Joice Fernanda de Souza Oliveira, 'Atando e Desatando Nós: Negociantes e cativos no comércio interno de escravizados, 1850–1888' (PhD diss., Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 2019). However, notably

absent from these studies is any discussion of the dynamics of life aboard these coast-wise vessels.

96. See for example, Andrew Nicholson, Minh Dang and Zoe Trodd, 'A Full Freedom: Contemporary Survivors' Definitions of Slavery', *Human Rights Law Review* 18, no. 4 (2018): 689–704.

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