

THE PRICE OF BONDAGE: SLAVERY, SLAVE VALUATION, AND ECONOMICS IN THE ALBEMARLE

By

Jacob T. Parks

April 2018

Director of Thesis: Donald H. Parkerson

Major Department: History

This thesis examines the economics of antebellum slavery in the Albemarle region of North Carolina. Located in the northeastern corner of the Carolina colony, the Albemarle was a harsh location for settlement and thus, inhabitants settled relatively late by Virginians moving south in search of better opportunities. This thesis finds that examination of a region's slave economics not only conformed to, but also departed from, the larger slave experience in antebellum America.

The introduction of this thesis focuses on the literature surrounding slave economics and valuation in antebellum America. After this, the main body of the thesis follows. Chapter one focuses on the various avenues slaves became property of white men and women in the Albemarle. This reveals that the county courts were intrinsically involved in allowing slave sales to occur, in addition to loop-holes slave owners utilized to retain chattel slavery cheaply. Additionally, this chapter pays special attention to slave valuation and statistical analysis. The following chapters revolve around the topics of: the miscellaneous costs associated with slavery in the Albemarle, such as healthcare, food, and clothing; insuring the lives of slaves and hiring them out for work away from their master; and examination of runaway slave rewards in statistical terms, while also creating a narrative of the enslaved and their actions.

THE PRICE OF BONDAGE: SLAVERY, SLAVE VALUATION, AND ECONOMICS IN THE
ALBEMARLE

A Thesis

Presented To the Faculty of the Department of History

East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in History

by

Jacob Parks

April 2018

© Jacob Parks, 2018

THE PRICE OF BONDAGE: SLAVERY, SLAVE VALUATION, AND ECONOMICS IN THE
ALBEMARLE

by

Jacob T. Parks

APPROVED BY:

DIRECTOR OF
THESIS: _____

Donald H. Parkerson, Ph.D.

COMMITTEE MEMBER: _____

Wade G. Dudley, Ph.D.

COMMITTEE MEMBER: _____

Kennetta H. Perry, Ph.D.

CHAIR OF THE DEPARTMENT
OF HISTORY: _____

Christopher A. Oakley, Ph.D.

DEAN OF THE
GRADUATE SCHOOL: _____

Paul J. Gemperline, Ph.D.

DEDICATION

To my family and C.M.H.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my thesis director and committee, your professionalism and help during this process did not go unnoticed. Also, the great assistance of librarians and archivists proved to be invaluable.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	i
Copyright Page	ii
Signature Page	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgments	v
Table	vii
List of Images	viii
List of Maps.....	ix
Introduction: Debates on Slave Economics in Antebellum America	1
Slave Narratives	3
Slave Historiography in the early 20th Century	7
Slave Historiography during the Civil Rights Movement	15
The <i>Time on the Cross</i> Debate.....	20
Modern Slave Historiography.....	24
Chapter One: The Price of Flesh: Slave Purchasing and Valuation	30
Chapter Two: The Price of Maintenance: Examining the Costs Associated with Slave Ownership	57
Chapter Three: Slaves as Property: Slave Hiring and Life Insurance	73
Chapter Four: “Catch the Scoundrel!”: Escaped Slaves in the Albemarle	84
Conclusion: Slave Lives Matter	106
Bibliography	111
Appendices	116

Appendix 1.1: Valuation of William B. Clark's slaves, determined by age group...	116
Appendix 1.2: Slave Valuation Sources	117
Appendix 1.3: Increase in Albemarle Slave Prices.....	118
Appendix 3.1: Captain Timothy Hunter's insured slaves	119
Appendix 4.1: Runaway slave percentages, determined by complexion	120
Appendix 4.2: Average Runaway Reward, determined by slave sex	121
Appendix 4.3: Average Runaway Reward, determined by age descriptor.....	122
Appendix 4.4: Average Runaway Reward, determined by age group	123
Appendix 4.5: Average Runaway Reward, determined by complexion	124
Appendix 4.6: Average Runaway Reward, determined by race.....	126

TABLE

Table 1.1: Valuation of Martha B. Clark's Slaves, December 12, 1843 44

LIST OF IMAGES

Image 1.1: Deed of Gift, June 11, 1852	35
Image 1.2: Deed of Gift, Quaker Transfer, May 1, 1830.....	39
Image 1.3: Division of 72 Slaves, January 1, 1830	42
Image 1.4: Division of 72 Slaves, January 1, 1830	42
Image 1.5: Division of Slaves, March 20, 1835	46
Image 1.6: Bill of Sale, November 11, 1862.....	54
Image 2.1: Bill of Sale, Boots, October 30, 1857.....	71
Image 3.1: Reverse of Hiring Receipt, December 27, 1826	75
Image 3.2: Slave Hire Receipt, February 5, 1851	76
Image 3.3: Reverse of Hiring Receipt, January 4, 1854	78
Image 4.1: Slave Runaway Advertisement, <i>Carolina Observer</i> (Fayetteville),	
June 28, 1827	84
Image 4.2: Slave Runaway Advertisement, <i>Edenton Gazette</i> (Edenton),	
December 25, 1820	93
Image 4.3: Photograph of Beverly Hall, Edenton, circa 1915	99
Image 4.4: Slave Runaway Advertisement, <i>North-Carolina Miscellany</i> (Edenton),	
March 7, 1832	103
Image 4.5: Slave Runaway Advertisement, <i>Elizabeth City Star and North Carolina Eastern Intelligencer</i> (Elizabeth City), July 7, 1827	103

MAPS

Map 4.1: Clipped section of “[Untitled map showing area from Edenton northeast to the Dismal Swamp Canal] [circa 1830s]”.....	102
Map 4.2: Clipped section of “Albemarle and Chesepeake Canal connecting Chesepeake Bay with Currituck, Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds and their tributary streams [c. 1858]”	104

INTRODUCTION:
DEBATES ON SLAVE ECONOMICS IN ANTEBELLUM AMERICA

No other issue in American history had a more profound effect on modern society than the institution of slavery. The evils of a racist system with economic foundations left American society in a ruinous state. The lasting problems of race relations and social inequality persisted throughout Reconstruction, into the New Era, and even after the conclusion of both World Wars. It took a full century for profound changes to be put into place by the U.S. government to begin to address the woes of Jim Crow and black suffrage in the nation. In 1965, President Johnson signed into law the Voting Rights Act, an initiative that hoped to bring voting rights to the African-American minority. Yet still, there exists problems of race and inequality of class and society in America today. Additionally, the current Black Lives Matter movement has direct antecedents to the forceful bondage of the black population in America.

Given the long-lasting legacy of slavery in America, it is not surprising that the study of its history is long and remains robust, with each generation of historians influenced by societal norms and progressive movements and sympathies. The historiography of slavery consists of roughly four periods: first, early slave narratives and autobiographies; second, Progressive-Era writings that sought to justify Jim Crow; third, efforts made by historians and economists during the Civil Rights Movement in America; and fourth, modern interpretations of slave historiography in the past two decades. The following pages examine the main trends in the field, with special attention to the economic history of slavery.

The first writings of slave histories began with the narratives of the slaves themselves, thus giving researchers a valuable insight into the slave experience. The New Deal programs of the 1930s and 1940s helped document more slave narratives with the help of the Works Progress Administration. The next period of writings concerning slave historiography occurred during the

first quarter of the twentieth century and was essentially a rebuttal of slave profitability. During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, slave historiography went through a dramatic change with the publication of Kenneth Stampp's seminal work *The Peculiar Institution* (1956) and Stanley Elkins controversial monograph *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (1959).

During the same period, Alfred H. Conrad and John R. Meyer published an article "The Economics of Slavery in the Ante Bellum South" (1958) and continued research with their co-authored book *The Economics of Slavery: And Other Studies in Econometric History* (1964). The 1970s served as a transitional period in the study of slave history. Herbert G. Gutman's *Slavery and the Numbers Game: A Critique of Time on the Cross* (1975) followed on the heels of the insightful yet highly critiqued work of Fogel and Engerman.

More modern works (within the last ten to twenty years) tended to focus on the lasting impressions of the slave system on American society. Edward E. Baptist draws a connection between slavery and American capitalism with *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (2014), while Brenda E. Stevenson tends to make a societal connection, with *What is Slavery?* (2015). Stevenson urged the reader to think about slavery in a broader perspective, given the current state of affairs within the black community. Marisa Fuentes' *Dispossessed Lives* (2016) offers a new approach to understand the intersection of gender, slavery, and society in the Atlantic World. Additionally, Daina Ramey Berry's *Price for their Pound of Flesh* (2017) enlightens readers to the changing valuation of enslaved bodies, from birth to death.

The depth of academic writing on the frontiers of slave history resulted from factors relating to economics, class, and the state of affairs within American society as a whole. This

thesis seeks to understand each of these periods of slave historiography as individual groups, bounded by time and perspective, and trace the changing attitudes of scholarship concerning America's greatest atrocity.

Slave Narratives

From the beginning of the slave experience in America, and in a larger context of the Atlantic World, slaves fought against white-imposed constraints on their education. While illiteracy ran rampant throughout slave populations, a small fraction – through one means or another – recorded the events of their life, enabling future generations to learn from a first-person perspective. Arguably the most famous American slave narrative is Frederick Douglas' writings. Within a North Carolina context however, slave narratives are not as prevalent as they are in other locations, but Moses Grandy and Harriet Anne Jacobs are the most prominent voices to document slave life in the Old North State.

Moses Grandy's life exemplified what it meant to be human chattel in antebellum America. Born in Camden county around 1788, Moses saw first-hand the horrors of plantation life for slaves in the Albemarle. His siblings were numerous, and Moses constantly saw brothers or sisters bought by enslavers in the region or dying as a result of their enslavement.¹ Moses recounted with emotional description his mother's reaction to one of his brother's purchase:

My mother, frantic with grief, resisted their taking her child away. She was beaten, and held down; she fainted; and, when she came to herself, her boy was gone. She made much outcry, for which the master tied her up to a peach-tree in the yard, and flogged her.²

Mr. Tyler of Pasquotank county, a man with a reputation as a cruel master, purchased another of Grandy's brothers. Tyler sent out Moses' brother one frigid evening with no food or

¹ Moses Grandy stated he remembered having four sisters and four brothers, though he knows his mother had more children; the others were bought and transferred before Moses could remember. Moses Grandy, *Narrative of the Life of Moses Grandy, Late a Slave of the United States of America* (Boston: Oliver Johnson, 1844), 1.

² *Ibid.*

clothes to track down cattle, and after the slave returned empty-handed, Mr. Tyler flogged him. After setting out once again on his errand, the boy received assistance from an unnamed benevolent “white woman” who gave him food. Alas, the boy could not find the steers and, avoiding more punishment by Mr. Tyler, “he piled up a heap of leaves, and laid himself down in them, and died there. He was found through a flock of turkey buzzard hovering over him; these birds had pulled his eyes out.”³

Grandy’s narrative is not only important for the vivid description he paints of cruel slave treatment in the antebellum South, but also because his life exemplified the malleability of antebellum slavery. When Moses’ master Billy Grandy died, a partition of slaves resulted in the deceased’s son James Grandy being owner of Moses. Because James was a minor, Moses had a turbulent life as a young slave, rented year after year to different men in the Albemarle. It was during this time that Moses became acquainted with the shipping industry and the vitality of ferrying goods between the Albemarle and Norfolk markets. During the War of 1812, he acquired “some canal boats” to continue trade between the two regions, bypassing the British blockade of the Chesapeake Bay.⁴ Moses Grandy’s life as a prominent African-American mariner in coastal North Carolina started as a result of his constant hiring, and ultimately, he utilized the tools of his trade to gain freedom. By the time Grandy purchased his freedom, he invested almost two thousand dollars in purchasing freedom just for himself, not including the money that he saved to purchase the papers for his wife, son, and grandchild.⁵

While the writing of Moses Grandy helps illuminate the life of slaves in North Carolina, Harriet Jacobs’ *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* broke the gender barrier to better understand

³ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, i-ii, 41.

slave historiography. Recent scholarship abounds in works concerning her life in bondage and involvement in the abolition movement.⁶ Jacobs accomplished an ambitious goal by creating an account that was accurate, full of rhetorical devices, and moving to the free female populace of the northern states.

Especially important is the aspect of painful memories that thread themselves through all slave narratives during this time. Jacobs considered this aspect in her autobiography at the conclusion of her work:

It has been painful to me, in many ways to recall the dreary years I passed in bondage. I would gladly forget them if I could. Yet the retrospection is not altogether without solace; for with those gloomy recollections come tender memories of my good old grandmother, like light, fleecy clouds floating over a dark and troubled sea.⁷

Much like Moses Grandy, Harriet Jacobs' life in bondage reaffirms the position slaves played in a cruel economic system. During her childhood, Jacobs saw the effect skilled artisan slaves had on the income of the Albemarle region. Her father Elijah Knox paid a yearly fee of two hundred dollars to Mrs. Knox, the widow of his former owner, Dr. Andrew Knox.⁸

No matter how painful or agonizing it was for former slaves to remember, it was important to recall their experiences for the sake of their family, for their nation, and the future, so that no other atrocity like slavery imposed itself upon American mores. Slave narratives gave a voice to the voiceless. To the hard-working researcher, there is an abundance of slave oral histories that form an integral part of slave historiography.

⁶ See Ann Taves, "Spiritual Purity and Sexual Shame: Religious Themes in the Writings of Harriet Jacobs," *Church History* 56, no. 1 (Mar., 1987): 59-72; Lauren Berlant, "The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Harriet Jacobs, Frances Harper, Anita Hill," *American Literature* 65, no. 3 (Sept., 1993): 549-574; Georgia Kreiger, "Playing Dead: Harriet Jacobs' Survival Strategy in 'Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl,'" *African American Review* 42, 3-4 (Fall/Winter 2008): 607-621; Novian Whitsitt, "Reading between the Lines: The Black Cultural Tradition of Masking in Harriet Jacobs' 'Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl,'" *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 31, no. 1 (2010): 733-88.

⁷ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 201.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 5, 282.

Another slave narrative source, the “Slave Narratives,” survives the record via its inclusion into the Works Progress Administration. This is a wealth of information, and for researchers specifically interested in one state’s slavery, the state-by-state organization of the “Slave Narratives” proves to be of great assistance. The Library of Congress retains these records, and scholars continue to write and edit collections dealing with the relationship between the WPA and slave narration. Belinda Hurmence’s work is useful for navigating the ten thousand pages of oral history transcriptions.

My Folks don’t want me to Talk about Slavery appeared in 1984 thanks to the diligent work of Hurmence. The editor intended this particular collection of WPA narratives to specifically revolve around North Carolina’s former slaves, which numbered 176 in total.⁹ While the editing and compiling of those records was too difficult and lengthy an endeavor, Hurmence sought to draw on a representative sample of the state’s slaves. Hurmence strives to give a voice to former slaves in addition to recognizing “the black contribution to the nation’s development, and to the development of North Carolina in particular.”¹⁰ To remember these slaves is to remember and acknowledge the humanity of each slave’s story. In other words, “That is why Sarah must be allowed to speak for herself. That is why it is important to talk about slavery.”¹¹

Over a decade later, Hurmence edited another collection of WPA slave narratives. *Slavery Time When I was Chillun* (1997) provided the stories of twelve former slaves from across the United States and juxtaposed these words with photographs of Depression-era black communities. Surely, it was more difficult for Hurmence to select her historical actors for this work because, in total, she had over two thousand slaves from seventeen states from which to

⁹ *My Folks Don’t Want Me to Talk about Slavery: Twenty-One Oral Histories of Former North Carolina Slaves*, edited by Belinda Hurmence (Winston-Salem, N.C.: John F. Blair, 1984), xi.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, xii.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, ix.

choose.¹² Hurmence cautions the reader to reflect on the motivations for the WPA *Slave Narratives* project: “Some of the complete manuscripts lead one to guess that these writers had been employed less for their skills than because the Great Depression had left them jobless.”¹³ However, by and large, this was the first wide-spread initiative to document the story of slaves from the lips of black folk.

For over three centuries, the “history of black slavery had been written primarily by white historians.”¹⁴ Therefore, readers need to understand the motivations through which people preserve and maintain the archive. The WPA *Slave Narratives* project is a useful source of slave documentation; however, it also reveals that many former slaves living in the Great Depression were reminiscent of their time in bondage, an era where they often were fed and clothed better than in the 1930s.¹⁵

Slave historiography in the early 20th Century

By and large, work on slave history in the early 20th century featured racist sentiments that paralleled the growing racial tensions within American society. It was in this environment that the noted historian Ulrich Bonnell Phillips became one of the founding fathers in the study of the antebellum South and plantation life. In his *American Negro Slavery*, Phillips gave readers an in-depth examination of America’s slave system and the “plantation régime.” Phillips published this manuscript in 1918 during the concluding months of World War I. The overall goal of *American Negro Slavery* was to tackle “the wide ramifications of negro slavery.”¹⁶ Given

¹² *Slavery Time When I Was Chillun*, edited by Belinda Hurmence (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1997): vii.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, viii.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, x.

¹⁶ Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the supply, employment and control of negro labor as determined by the plantation régime* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1918), vii.

his broad approach, Phillips began his examination of slavery in America by focusing on the very introduction of the black population into the New World.

Much of Phillips' work hinged on eugenic notions that Europeans were "sophisticated" and "civilized" as opposed to Africans, people who needed civilizing. Phillips displayed these racist mentalities by describing the foundational motivations for the creation of the New World's slave trade:

Thus from purely economic considerations the sophisticated European colonists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries involved themselves and their descendants... in the toils of a system which on the one hand had served their remote forbears with good effect, but which on the other hand civilized peoples had long and almost universally discarded as an incubus.¹⁷

Phillips then turned his attention to writers before him, beginning with Adam Smith who scorned slaveowners for their lack of proper money-management, thereby driving slave prices exponentially high. Smith even conceded that slave productivity in the sugar colonies might increase "by liberal policies promoting intelligence among the slaves and assimilating their condition to that of freemen."¹⁸

Phillips also focused on the Old North State in this same chapter. Daniel R. Goodloe wrote in the 1840s that the antebellum South's stagnant economic state was due precisely to the institution of slavery and the limitations it placed on manufacturing. But Phillips also presented arguments that justified slavery. He used J. E. Cairnes' work to illustrate the effectiveness of the slave régime. Published during the Civil War, *The Slave Power, its Character, Career and Probably Designs* served as an economic defense of American slavery. According to Cairnes,

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 345-346.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 347.

slavery worked best when used in large units, which increased fertility among women, in addition to staple crop cultivation with little or no emphasis on industry.¹⁹

Phillips' historiographical work here illuminates the lack of humanity that slaves received at the hands of scholars during the nineteenth and early-twentieth century. In fact, his focus on the economic viability and productivity of slavery threaded itself throughout these writings and did not receive revision until the mid-twentieth century.

In terms of "sound business and entrepreneurship," Phillips wrote of the proper control of a population of slaves. He pointed out that before an enslaver counted his profits from a growing season, he first deducted necessary payments to continue the enslavement of his bondspeople. Such measures were taxes paid to the local authorities, overseers wages, and balancing the books with creditors of various sorts, including doctors, who provided health care to slaves. Enslavers considered all of these measures as "necessary" yet dreadful: "None of these charges would any sound method of accounting permit the master to escape."²⁰ According to Phillips, slaveowners were under the yoke of their own institution.

Other contributions Phillips made to the discussion of slave economics was his explanation of source materials and methodology. Phillips differentiated the types of slave appraisals and thought each was unique and useful for analysis. The first were estate valuations evidenced by probate records, such as wills or deeds that put monetary values on bondspeople. The second type of valuation involved the judicial system, whereby, as the result of court cases and criminal offenses, slaves earned price tags next to their names. Of the two, Phillips considered "the appraisals of criminals... may be assumed under such laws as Virginia

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 349, 354.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 359.

maintained... to be fairly accurate.”²¹ However, Phillips noted that the best source for obtaining monetary measures of a slave’s worth come from the bills of sales because they document the “actual market transactions”²² of enslavement at a particular time. This explanation of source materials in conjunction with other aspects of Phillips’ *American Negro Slavery* illuminates his authority within the scholarly community.

Phillips also used a variety of sources in his research – not just different formats – but items documenting the slave régime in America since European exploration and settlement. There are items written in French and Spanish that concerned the slave system in the Sugar Islands. Phillips used these sources with his comparative analysis of increased slave prices. His use of a Quasi-Atlantic approach also helped bridge the gaps between American, Spanish, and French systems of African enslavement. He used these three nations and geographic regions to understand slave prices’ increase across the board mainly during the eighteenth century.²³

While there is much to be commended for Phillips’ professional approach to research and analytical argument, many of his main economic theses remain controversial to this day. For instance, in response to others’ arguments that slave exhaustion formed an imperative part of the plantation régime, Phillips wrote that plantation labor had to be cut short because of the restriction of number of hours in a working day, so with “the harvest of tobacco, rice and cotton much perseverance but little strain was involved.”²⁴ Surely many farm hands in the twenty-first century question Phillips on this issue. He also made another point: “the brevity of the period would have prevented any serious debilitating effect.”²⁵ From this argument, it seems Phillips

²¹ *Ibid.*, 368.

²² *Ibid.*, 368-369.

²³ *Ibid.*, 364-366.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 384.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

does not grasp that unskilled slave labor can be debilitating, with oppressive heat and the drudgery that goes along with harvesting tobacco and other cash crops in the south. Contrast that controversial statement with a more logical one based on economics: from a purely financial standpoint, slave exhaustion – that is, driving a slave to the brink of dehydration and death – made no sense because the low slave prices and high crop prices that manifested such a mentality would be purely temporary.²⁶

The lasting implications of a slave-based economy, according to Phillips, was a system of constant borrowing of funds to increase property ownership and increased product or output from said property. Phillips saw slaveowners stuck in a vicious cycle from which they could not remove themselves, borrowing money from more prosperous businessmen and plantation owners in order to purchase more acreage, purchasing more slaves to work the increased property, and paying off previous debts to increase their overall revenue. This said, Phillips saw enslavement as an incredible risk, with many enslavers not producing enough financial overhead to recoup their losses, thereby defaulting on their personal loans. This led to a number of financial crises in the south. Phillips concludes by noting that “plantation slavery had in strictly business aspects at least as many drawbacks as it had attractions.”²⁷

Such is the dynamic writing of U. B. Phillips. He described the birth of slavery in the Americas in the terms that many of his contemporaries would understand: early movements toward a capitalistic society that also lent a helping hand to “inferior” people. Obviously, racist Jim Crow sentiments existed within this historiography, but Phillips also placed himself neatly within a subset of slave historiography that emerged out of this scholarly investigation. Much like *The Columbian Exchange* by Alfred Crosby remains on the shelves of scholars across the

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 385-386.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 401.

globe, anyone interested in slavery in America must also have some knowledge of Phillips' *American Negro Slavery*. To truly grasp how slave historiography morphed through American history, historians must first direct their attention to Phillips and others like him.

Eight years after the publication of *American Negro Slavery*, Rosser Howard Taylor turned a Phillipsonian lens onto North Carolina's slave régime with *Slaveholding in North Carolina: An Economic View*. Taylor – using sparse research of quantitative measures available in the period – gave a concerted effort to understand the different dynamics involved in slaveholding in North Carolina. He divided the Old North State into distinct regions: the areas of cotton production formed in the eastern part of the state in Edgecombe, Pitt, Bertie, Martin, and Lenoir counties, while the other region was a south-western one comprising Mecklenburg, Iredell, Union, Anson, and Richmond counties. Tobacco extended into the state from the tobacco belt of Virginia. Above all, corn reigned supreme as the staple crop in the state. Between the two cotton districts was the area of turpentine cultivation, while the southeast bent to a rice-based economy.

Taylor's main research base for North Carolina's colonial period were: "the *Colonial Records [of North Carolina]*, Legislative Papers, early histories, and wills."²⁸ Once outside of the colonial period, Taylor consulted more numerous sources including archival documents and published work. He utilized *The Papers of Thomas Ruffin* and *The Papers of Archibald D. Murphey*, both of which became edited collections within the last decade. He also included the famous *Pettigrew Papers* in his examination of North Carolina's slave economy, and posed questions to farm journals, periodicals, and plantation ledgers.

²⁸ Howard Rosser Taylor, *Slaveholding in North Carolina: An Economic View* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1926), 7.

Finally, Taylor examined many of the newspapers published in antebellum North Carolina such as the *Fayetteville Gazette*, *Greensborough Patriot*, and the *North Carolina Standard*, in addition to those outside of the state. An issue of the *Yale Review* (1922) also appears in Taylor's references, along with *De Bow's Review* (New Orleans), *Farmers' Register* (Petersburg, Virginia), the *Nile's Weekly Register* (Baltimore), and *Political Science Quarterly* (New York).

A clear connection exists between Phillips' methodology and the process through which Taylor researched and wrote about North Carolina's slave system. Beyond just the material that these two scholars consulted, Taylor's aim and purpose likened itself to Phillips' *American Negro Slavery*. Taylor employed a clear white-centric lens on this controversial topic. At its heart, Taylor's work centered on "the chief problems which confronted slaveowners in the management of their establishments."²⁹ Noticeably absent from this study were the lasting effects of an economic system based on slavery and racism. Instead, Taylor found North Carolina's slave situation particularly interesting not for its human aspect, but because there was "greater variety of slaveholding interests in North Carolina than was to be found in any of the slaveholding states."³⁰

Taylor's work became at least locally recognized within the scholarly community. Holland Thompson published a book review of *Slaveholding in North Carolina* in the October 1927 issue of *The North Carolina Historical Review*. Thompson's major critique was the overall truncated writing of Taylor; the total page count for *Slaveholding in North Carolina* totals to only 103 pages, including references. However, Thompson did praise Taylor's approach and

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

source base: “The method is sound and the text is fully documented.... [And] the author’s conclusions... will be generally accepted.”³¹

Taylor’s *Slaveholding in North Carolina* continued to be part of the scholarly discourse during the early twentieth century and beyond. In fact, a brief mention of Taylor appeared in Harold D. Woodman’s “The Profitability of Slavery: A Historical Perennial” in 1963. Published by *The Journal of Southern History*, Woodman juxtaposed Taylor with Phillips in his historiographical introduction.³² As late as 2013, Taylor appeared once again in the references of scholarly articles such as John David Smith’s “‘I Was Raised Poor and Hard as Any Slave’: African American Slavery in Piedmont North Carolina.” Smith used Taylor’s brief but useful discussion of the state’s geography to set up an understanding of differentiations between slavery in the east and west of North Carolina. While exclusively valuable, Smith sought to update this historiography.³³

Overall, Phillips and Taylor serve as fundamental actors in the early historiography of slave economics in North Carolina. Moreover, each reflects the racist rhetoric that was prevalent during this time. These scholars used sound archival material in conjunction with reputable secondary sources, however, they asked the wrong set of questions of their subject. The economics of slavery in North Carolina was not strictly bound to the interests, motives, and actions concerning the white ruling class. The enslaved people themselves provide important insights to this aspect of early American history.

³¹ Holland Thompson, “Review: Slaveholding in North Carolina: An Economic View,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 4, no. 4 (Oct., 1927), 491.

³² Harold D. Woodman, “The Profitability of Slavery: A Historical Perennial,” *The Journal of Southern History* 29, no. 3 (Aug., 1963): 303-325.

³³ John David Smith, “‘I Was Raised Poor and Hard as Any Slave’: African American Slavery in Piedmont North Carolina,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 90, no. 1 (Jan., 2013): 1-25.

Slave Historiography during the Civil Rights Movement

The investigation of slave history experienced a fundamental shift during the Civil Rights Movement in America. Beginning with *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (1956) and progressing further into the next two decades, historians tended to revamp traditionally-held perceptions of slave profitability as well as the moral issues associated with African-American bondage.

Kenneth M. Stampp's *The Peculiar Institution* was the "powder keg" to this explosion of literature regarding the societal issues caused by slavery. Stampp wrote a truly profound work, both eloquent and argumentative. At the center of Stampp's research base was a great synthesis of manuscript collections from various institutions. Some notable examples were the Pettigrew Family Papers from the University of North Carolina's Southern Historical Collection and the Slave Narrative Collection of the Library of Congress. The balance of Stampp's primary sources spread across nine states, in libraries and archives.

Not only with his research base did Stampp become a national authority on slavery, but it was his interpretive work and analytical approach that set him apart from earlier scholars. Stampp sought to break the traditional understanding of the birth of American slavery by stating that there was nothing inherently different about the black race that led white slaveowners to believe only certain crops could be maintained by slave labor. In other words, any demographic of society could supply the demand for labor in the antebellum south, not just slaves. Therefore, using slaves on plantations became "a deliberate choice... made by men who sought greater returns than they could obtain from their own labor alone, and who found other types of labor more expensive."³⁴ But Stampp was careful to not appear too critical of slaveholders,

³⁴ Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), 5.

understanding that the growth of American slavery resulted from unacknowledged mistakes from 1619 through the antebellum period. In this way, Stamp, like Phillips, made the case that “southerners became the victims of their own peculiar institution.”³⁵

In considering Phillips’ legacy, Stamp wrote:

One must make allowances for his primitive statements about Negroes; for his failure to understand that an oppressed class or race will not settle for paternalism; for his inability to see that it was slavery, not the plantation, that gave the Old South its identity; for his belief that the Old South was a capitalistic society; for his contention that white supremacy was the central theme of Southern history; for his failure to perceive the class implications of his empirical evidence; and for his revisionist interpretation of Civil War causation.³⁶

In sum, Phillips did indeed uncover new material for the examination of slavery, but it was his analytical tools and interpretation that were lacking.³⁷ To properly understand American Negro slavery as it was, Stamp advocated that historians must occupy a position of objectivity. Even before the publication of *The Peculiar Institution*, Stamp noticed the “problem of the biased historian” when examining American slavery.³⁸ At that time, no fundamental “scientific and completely objective study” of slavery had been undertaken. If historians are to move past biased perceptions of American slavery and examine new sources, such as court records, Stamp thought it would “make it clear that members of this group [slaveholders] were, on occasion, capable of extreme cruelty toward their slaves.”³⁹ Accordingly, the only generalization Stamp sees in American slave historiography is: “Some masters were harsh and frugal, others were mild and generous, and the rest ran the whole gamut in between.”⁴⁰

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

³⁶ Kenneth M. Stamp, “Reconsidering U. B. Phillips: A Comment,” *Agricultural History* 41, no. 4 (Oct., 1967): 366.

³⁷ In an earlier article, Stamp acknowledged Phillips for making “the largest single contribution to our present understanding of southern slavery.” Kenneth M. Stamp, “The Historian and Southern Negro Slavery,” *The American Historical Review* 57, no. 3 (Apr., 1952): 613.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 615.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 616.

Another overgeneralized topic of American slavery revolves around the slave's emotions toward the peculiar institution. The typical argument before Stamppp ran as follows: some slaves were content with slavery, so it could not be that bad in principle. This, of course, is a gross oversimplification of the complex nature of human emotions. Put a different way, Stamppp argued "that the majority of Negroes seemed to submit to their bondage proves neither their special fitness for it nor their contentment with it."⁴¹ He continues by arguing that historians should not rely solely on scant oral history documentation to understand American slavery, for "the mind of the slave can also be studied through his external behavior as it was described in plantation manuscripts, court records, and newspaper files."⁴² In short, Stamppp argued that:

Slavery, then, was the inevitable product of neither the weather nor some irresistible force in the South's economic evolution. Slaves were used in southern agriculture because men sought greater returns than they could obtain from their own labor alone. It was a man-made institution. It was inevitable only insofar as everything that has happened in history was inevitable, not in terms of immutable or naturalistic laws.⁴³

Another work published during this period was Elkin's *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (1959). Echoing the sentiment of Stamppp just three years prior, Elkins decried the American institution of human chattel slavery in addition to contrasting it to other forms of bondage evident during that era. Elkins' work helped foster a new and invigorated attitude toward studying American slavery. While his work complicated our understanding of slavery, it also presented slavery in terms of its paradoxes.

At the time of his research, Elkins believed that the current historiography of American slavery relied too much on creating connections between the contemporary race relations. His words concerning this phenomenon were: "there is a painful touchiness in all aspects of the

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 617.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 619.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 622.

subject; the discourse contains almost too much immediacy, it makes too many connections with present problems.”⁴⁴ Such was the argument of an American GI with service in Italy during the Second World War; he also viewed Nazi Germany’s concentration camp regime “as a special and highly perverted instance of human slavery.”⁴⁵ Unknowingly, the creation of this exact paradox is exactly what Elkins aims to understand in *Slavery*.

A graduate and doctoral student of American history at Columbia University, Elkins studied under the gaze of noted historian Richard Hofstadter.⁴⁶ The pupil gave proper attention to his mentor, noting that Hofstadter attacked U. B. Phillips for examining a miniscule body of research. If researchers examined a wider consensus of materials, sketchy analysis went by the way side. Phillips himself played a significant though indirect part in the creation of *Slavery*. Elkins began his work with a highly detailed historiography of American slavery until the 1950s and traces the beginnings of Phillips’ writings to the creation of the modern university and the seminar-led classroom.

This system allowed scholars such as James Ford Rhodes to study and produce works on American slavery that saw, “slavery was fundamentally evil,”⁴⁷ an evil shared by the people of both the North and the South. This, in turn, resulted in an atmosphere that fostered racial supremacy, leaving many assertions unchecked until Stamp and Elkins. In sum, Elkins thought that historians more or less exhausted the primary source archive and left all material uncovered. To Elkins, the best way to increase discourse on American slavery is to answer the *why* question

⁴⁴ Stanley M. Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959), 1.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁴⁶ “Stanley M. Elkins (1935-2013), Obituary,” *Daily Hampshire Gazette* (Northampton, MA) September 17, 2013. Date accessed January 10, 2018. <<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/gazettenet/obituary.aspx?n=stanley-m-elkins&pid=167001369>>

⁴⁷ Elkins, *Slavery*, 7.

and understand paradoxes and “thinking on the same subject, permitting that in itself to become part of the problem.”⁴⁸

Eugene D. Genovese’s *The Political Economy of Slavery* (1965) was his first monograph and culmination of various articles and projects streamed together by the young scholar. At the time of its publication, *The Political Economy of Slavery* received mixed reviews. James D. Foust stated that “economic historians will find much of this book unsatisfactory.”⁴⁹ To this reviewer, Genovese’s overall econometric arguments were less than stellar. Much like Phillips – a historian that Genovese readily quotes – Genovese’s early work shows intensive and unique research, yet he fails to reinforce his position with quantitative means. Additionally, Genovese critiques Conrad and Meyer repeatedly in *The Political Economy of Slavery*. For example, Genovese believes Conrad and Meyer highly simplified their data collection and analysis. Genovese states that “cotton statistics were not kept with the degree of accuracy required for sophisticated analysis.”⁵⁰

Essentially, Conrad and Meyer advocated for a sense of increased productivity; however, Genovese finds fault with the co-authors on a simple rounding error. Conrad and Meyer find no substantial increase in cotton productivity during the “depressed 1840s,” yet notice a significant uptick in the following decade. However, Genovese picks apart these numbers: “if we carry out the arithmetic two more decimal places we get .0494 (1840), .0538 (1850), and .0562 (1860).”⁵¹ Genovese criticizes Conrad and Meyer for inflating their data via irresponsible rounding. By intrinsically investigating Conrad and Meyer’s findings, Genovese reverses the argument of

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁴⁹ James D. Foust, “Review: The Political Economy of Slavery, Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South,” *Southern Economic Journal* 32, no. 4 (Apr., 1966): 487.

⁵⁰ Eugene D. Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), 63.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

previous economists: even during the 1840s, crops increased in productivity over the more “prosperous” 1850s. Genovese’s early work shows that there was an atmosphere in academia that encouraged a discussion on slave historiography and economic analysis.

While not particularly focused on slave economics, Blassingame’s *The Slave Community* “breaks sharply with American historiographical tradition.”⁵² Put another way, by Gavin Wright, Blassingame began the treatment of American slavery via an analysis of “the psychological complexities of slavery.”⁵³ Blassingame began using psychological theories to help understand the emotions and actions of the slave. Utilizing this framework upon a bedrock of slave autobiographies found highly insightful and revolutionary ideas regarding the American slave. However, Blassingame did not stop there. He also sought the viewpoints of white travelers and the slaveowners themselves, thereby allowing for a three-fold comparative approach to understand slave personalities. The resulting approach allowed Blassingame to give influential agency to slaves in America.⁵⁴

The *Time on the Cross* Debate

Given the relative importance of Fogel and Engerman’s work on slave economics in 1974, *Time on the Cross* did not occur within a vacuum void of antecedents; the authors willingly acknowledge the previous work of Conrad and Meyer. Fogel and Engerman characterized Conrad and Meyer as “cliometricians,” researchers who served as the beacon for the young discipline of history of economics:

Since the appearance of [Conrad and Meyer’s research,] the number of scholars attempting to apply mathematical and statistical methods to history increased from less

⁵² John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), xi.

⁵³ Gavin Wright, “Review: *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Ante-Bellum South* by John W. Blassingame,” *The Business History Review* 47, no. 3 (1973): 386.

⁵⁴ Blassingame, *The Slave Community*, xi-xii.

than a score to several hundred. As their numbers have proliferated so have their iconoclastic findings.”⁵⁵

Fogel and Engerman sought to challenge the historiography previously established in the first half of the twentieth century, and the authors note they created their work via changes in STEM disciplines, “together with the availability of high-speed computers, put information long locked in obscure archives at the disposal of a new generation of scholars.”⁵⁶ The authors, a part of this extensive examination of recently-found primary sources, justify their publication of this controversial look at slave economics because “the new findings should no longer be restricted to the pages of esoteric scholarly journals.”⁵⁷

Time on the Cross centered on extensive primary source examination. The authors presented ten mini-theses fundamentally different from the previous historiographical writings of scholars. The most central thesis to *Time on the Cross* is that slavery – despite previous arguments on the contrary – was a profitable institution, and slaveholders were very much interested in their economic livelihood. Another point that goes against the grain of scholarly work is the authors’ basis that the economy of the antebellum south was far from stagnated, or defunct: “slavery as an economic system was never stronger and the trend was toward even further entrenchment.”⁵⁸

The third point is a corollary of the second. Slaveholders did not perceive a pessimistic future as was typically argued. Indeed, Fogel and Engerman argue that, at the start of the Civil War, slave-owners perceived a bright future. Next, Fogel and Engerman quantified their next argument. They showed that certain circumstances “made southern slave agriculture 35 percent

⁵⁵ Robert William Fogel and Stanley F. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1974): 6-7.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

more efficient than the northern system of family farming.”⁵⁹ Then, in agreement with Stamp, there was nothing that made the average slave lazy or inept. In fact, he was even more productive than white farmers.

Fogel and Engerman then related the slave experience to industry, writing that there is no evidence to defend the opinion that slavery was incompatible with industry-led enterprises. The authors then turned to the material conditions of life and argue that it compared favorably to wage labor. They also noted that “slave-breeding, sexual exploitation, and promiscuity destroyed the black family is a myth.”⁶⁰ This is a point that goes in direct confrontation to many slave narratives and with much slave history written during the Civil Rights Movement that focused on the emotional distress caused by American bondage.

The next point is altogether unconvincing. They argue that “the typical slave field hand received about 90 percent of the income he produced.”⁶¹ Finally, Fogel and Engerman continued their second and third arguments, noting that, during the two decades that preceded the Civil War, *per capita* income in the South was the highest in any region in the nation. Nations such as Italy did not achieve this high economic prosperity until the 1940s.

While *Time on the Cross* achieved wide-ranging praise for its interpretation of quantitative measures, some scholars found faults with the work. Fogel and Engerman’s use of statistical records was at times questionable. For example, the use of statistics in understanding slave punishment and whippings is highly unprofessional and unfounded for their overall argument. Fogel and Engerman examined a Louisiana plantation owned by Bennett Barrow who kept a detailed record of the frequency of whippings on his property. The authors concluded that

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*
⁶⁰ *Ibid.*
⁶¹ *Ibid* 5-6.

the evidence – sparse as it was – “shows that over the course of two years a total of 160 whippings were administered, an average of 0.7 whippings per hand per year. About half the hands were not whipped at all during the period.”⁶² More or less, Fogel and Engerman argued that at times, slave punishments became exaggerated or not authentic of a larger phenomenon.

The most systematic critique of *Time on the Cross* came from Herbert G. Gutman’s work *Slavery and the Numbers Game: A Critique of Time on the Cross* in 1975. Gutman justified the publication of *Slavery and the Numbers Game* because

Time on the Cross is a profoundly flawed work. It is not merely that the book contains errors of fact and interpretation. All books that promise to revise our understanding of important aspects of the past exaggerate their findings and entice readers with bold and often extreme statements. It is rather that the *essential* evidence does not sustain the authors’ arguments reevaluating *slave performance*. The evidence does not make the case that enslaved Afro-Americans worked hard because they wanted to work hard.⁶³

To defend this bold statement, Gutman systematically examined the major points of *Time on the Cross*⁶⁴ and critiqued Fogel and Engerman’s approach, analysis, and methodology. For example, to refute the point that southern slave labor was more efficient than free farm labor, Gutman took special issue with Fogel and Engerman’s assumption of the slave mentality when isolating cases of “efficient” slave labor. This assumption, he argues, is too grandiose for such a serious topic like slavery.

In reference to their argument on slave whipping, Gutman simply states “the wrong question has been asked.”⁶⁵ Furthermore, the cliometrician finds him or herself in a socially awkward position by proposing that each slave received an average of 0.7 whippings a year, or 0.013 whippings per week. Basically, Gutman urged readers to ask one fundamental question

⁶² *Ibid.*, 145.

⁶³ Herbert G. Gutman, *Slavery and the Numbers Game: A Critique of Time on the Cross* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1975), xi-xii.

⁶⁴ Or, what he refers to as “T/C.”

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

about this data: Is it really useful? More often than not, he argued that it was not. Instead, a more reliable and scholarly statement reads: “It is much more relevant to know how often the whip was used.”⁶⁶ To amend Fogel and Engerman’s sketchy statement of whippings per year on the Barrow estate, Gutman found that a slave received punishment via the whip every 4.56 days. This statistic puts things in much better perspective than before.⁶⁷

Modern Slave Historiography

While the controversy over the profitability of slavery continues, other scholars addressed different dimensions of the “peculiar institution.” Among them are David Cecelski’s *The Waterman’s Song* (2001). Not only did Cecelski create an impressive work that helps understand slavery in a maritime setting, but he also provides a deeply interpretative and researched monograph to give agency to enslaved men and women in the tidewater regions of North Carolina.

According to the author, while there is consensus among scholars regarding black waterman in the Atlantic World,⁶⁸ there is a need to turn the focus more locally, to broaden our understanding of slavery in America. Key sources for Cecelski include slave narratives, such as the one recorded by Moses Grandy (mentioned above). Cecelski argues that, by using these sources responsibly, scholars garner a renewed appreciation for the “wide variety and complex character of maritime occupations performed by enslaved watermen.”⁶⁹

Cecelski developed a broader understanding of slavery in the Albemarle by considering the connections black watermen made while digging canals and piloting ships: “Familiar with

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Davis S. Cecelski, *The Waterman’s Song: Slavery and Freedom in Maritime North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001): xii.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

distant ports, they spread political news and democratic ideologies from as far away as New England, France, and Haiti into local slave communities.”⁷⁰ Cecelski’s work is important for a number of reasons, but notwithstanding all the praise he is due, his analysis and appreciation for Moses Grandy as an individual helps paint a portrait of slavery in a setting not typically acknowledged in the literature.

Edward E. Baptist’s contribution to the study of slave economics also breaks new ground. With his *The Half Has Never Been Told*, Baptist gives a convincing argument for a connection between slavery and American business enterprises. As a result, he argues that “slavery’s expansion shaped... the economy and politics of the new nation.”⁷¹

Baptist’s research is wide-ranging. For example, he advocates for the use of oral histories as testaments of the slave experience. Extensively employing the Works Progress Administration’s “Slave Narratives”, Baptist used a sweeping array of oral histories and testimonies in his writing. He implored readers and researchers to understand that “no one autobiography or interview is pure and objective as an account of all that the history books left untold. But read them all, and each one adds to a more detailed, clearer picture of the whole.”⁷²

In another ambitious work, Brenda E. Stevenson explores the lengthy history of slavery, through various eras and regions. *What is Slavery?* is a work that reflects the modern sympathies with the Black Lives Matters movement. What this shift in studying slave history strives for is a broad approach to understanding American slavery within a contemporary context. Stevenson acknowledges that *What is Slavery?*

is not meant to be a research monograph with groundbreaking new analysis, although some of it has drawn on my research and analysis that have not been published work of

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁷¹ Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014): xxi.

⁷² *Ibid.*, xxv.

generations of slavery scholars, including my own, that has collectively taught us much about this mammoth topic.⁷³

This acknowledgement of previous histories includes the controversial work of Fogel and Engerman, noting that the institution was extremely profitable.

What is Slavery? is a work that includes the story of slavery from its Mesopotamian roots and usage in Greek civilization, to the present issue of human trafficking as a new form of slavery. Her research pulls narratives from the WPA project, so it is also reminiscent of Baptist's methodology.

But Stevenson also includes a section of her book dedicated to the treatment and punishment of slaves. Though only three pages in total, "Slave Punishment and Material Support" is a direct counter to the argument of Fogel and Engerman in the 1970s. Stevenson uses slave narratives to argue that slaveowners treated their slaves harshly. Yet, Stevenson also uses statistical analysis to measure slave populations in Florida and Louisiana during the colonial era. This balance of quantitative measures and slave narrative and oral histories is used to perfection in *What is Slavery?*.

Marisa J. Fuentes' *Dispossessed Lives* (2016) serves as another approach to understand slavery by focusing on female slaves in Barbados and the broader Atlantic World. Fuentes recognized the difficulties in researching slavery in the traditional "colonial archive," and asked different questions to understand and analyze highly biased accounts.

Colonial Barbados was a society highly dominated by females, both white and black, and Fuentes' work is "an important shift from the extant scholarly focus on white men's domination of black and brown women in slave societies."⁷⁴ With her focus on the geographic make-up of

⁷³ Brenda Stevenson, *What is Slavery?* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 2015), 3.

⁷⁴ Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016): 1.

“Structures of Control,” Fuentes paints a chilling visual image of slave runaways in Barbados. Using this approach, in addition to her treatment of understanding generic terms such as “Negro” and “slave,” expands our perception slavery as it really happened in the Atlantic World. In other words:

By changing the perspective of a document’s author to that of an enslaved subject, questioning the archives’ veracity and filling out miniscule fragmentary mentions or the absence of the evidence with spatial and historical context our historical interpretation shifts to the enslaved viewpoint in important ways.⁷⁵

Finally, Daina Ramey Berry’s *The Price for their Pound of Flesh* presents insights into slave economics and valuation in antebellum America. Her work uses slave perspectives and how they “recalled and responded to their monetary value throughout the course of their lives.”⁷⁶ Through her research, Berry found that there were four separate types of valuation that slaves underwent before, during, and after their sale. First, the only example of an internal valuation, was the “soul value” that slaves attributed to themselves. Second was the appraisal value created by others “based on their [the slaves] potential work output.”⁷⁷ Thirdly, the actual market value of a slave was the sale price of human flesh “negotiated in a competitive market.”⁷⁸ Lastly, and perhaps most interesting, the ghost value of a slave was the price constructed at and beyond death via affixed prices to deceased slaves in legal cases and in the domestic cadaver trade. Berry’s main argument of slave commodification in America is simple and straightforward: “Looking at their views of commodification shifts the way we interpret slavery and adds to our understanding of social and cultural systems that continue to (de)value black life.”⁷⁹

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁷⁶ Daina Ramey Berry, *The Price for their Pound of Flesh: The Value of the Enslaved, from Womb to Grave, in the Building of a Nation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2017): 2.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

For female slaves, Berry draws a direct connection between appraisal values and a female's fecundity. She also challenges Phillips' argument concerning childbearing women, noting that "childbearing women commanded competitive monetary values in the market under specific circumstances in the early National Era."⁸⁰ This argument also challenges Fogel and Engerman's broad assumption on slave breeding. Berry uses examples from the "Slave Narratives" project to show specific examples of slave breeding on the American plantation. Placed as the first main body chapter in her book, her discussion of female slave valuation shows that traders and slavers were aware of women's importance for fertility at the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁸¹

The modern context of slave historiography is no longer within the realm of regional or isolated history. Today scholars concern themselves with the long-lasting impressions of slavery on America as a whole, and in particular, the impact that white supremacy influenced America's current racial problems. Furthermore, scholars like Marisa Fuentes and Daina Berry bring gender to the fore in the conversation of American slavery. The scholars who write the history of slavery continually build upon the methods and strategies used by their predecessors, and my examination of slave valuation in antebellum North Carolina serves as a way to offer a new approach and ask new questions concerning the intersection of slavery and economics. For example, this thesis attempts to challenge the typical generalizations of American slavery via examination of various sources, including plantation records and doctor's bills.

Slaveowners, especially in rural North Carolina, greatly valued their slaves and devoted substantial amounts of capital to maintain slavery. The corresponding medical and miscellaneous expenses compare favorably to the treatment free whites received. Intensive research regarding a

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

region's relationship to economics and slavery complicates typically-understood norms and generalizations of antebellum American slavery. Especially, case studies of slave economics show that no matter the isolation of a community, slaves maintained lines of communication and learned about their environment and valuation.

CHAPTER ONE – “THE PRICE OF FLESH: SLAVE PURCHASING AND VALUATION”

“A negro man was worth from \$800.00 to \$1,500.00, in the latter case he would have a trade. Women brought from \$600.00 to \$900.00. A child four or five years old (male) from \$50.00 to \$75.00. These prices are as I have heard my father state them.”⁸²

“I was born a slave; but I never knew it till six years of happy childhood had passed away.... I was so fondly shielded that I never dreamed I was a piece of merchandise.”⁸³

On April 30, 1831, John M. Skinner of Pasquotank County agreed to pay Edmund B. Harvey \$1,750 for the slaves that formerly belonged to Harvey’s wife Eliza. However, this bill of sale did not contain the language typically used in the vernacular of purchasing slaves in antebellum America. Purchasing these slaves constituted several statements and considerations:

First to pay myself and give a discharge to the said Edmund for the amount he owes me, being for money paid by me in discharge of certain payments in Pasquotank County against the said Edmund and Herman Davis as his security; and secondly to pay other debts of the said Edmund to the amount of the balance of the said sum of one thousand seven hundred and fifty dollars, the said payments to be made and proper vouchers, therefor to be [illegible] to the said Edmund written two months from the time at which I shall reserve or obtain [illegible] of the said slaves and if such payments are not made and such vouchers not [illegible] within the said two months then whatever remains as unpaid I am to pay to the said Edmund his [illegible] administrators or assigns.⁸⁴

Skinner was a fairly wealthy resident of the Albemarle. Before he and Harvey agreed to the complex terms mentioned above, John M. Skinner owned a substantial number of slaves.

According to the 1830 United States Federal Census, Skinner owned twenty-seven slaves in total, the majority being male.⁸⁵ This negotiation illustrates the maneuverability that slaveowners created in order to obtain slaves during the antebellum era, even if that owner more than likely had enough capital to pay cash for the slaves.

⁸² Memoir, page 7; Nelson M. Ferebee Papers (#404.1.a), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

⁸³ Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, 5.

⁸⁴ Bill of Sale, April 20, 1831, Pasquotank County Records of Slaves and Free Persons of Color, (CR 075.928.9), State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, North Carolina.

⁸⁵ 1830 United States Federal Census, Pasquotank, North Carolina.

Additionally, masters were cognizant of their economic livelihood during this period. One specific example that illustrates this were efforts by James Harris and Wilson W. Williams in 1852. Harris sold Jesse and Susan to Williams for the price of \$750. However, Williams agreed to “send said slaves away” in order to produce a profit. Harris and Williams were then to split the “nett proceeds,” granted their second sale exceed the initial \$750. However, if Williams failed in his duties and Jesse and Susan fetched a lower price, “the said Harris... himself and his heirs to pay to said Williams... the difference between the [amount] net and the seven hundred dollars.”⁸⁶ Around the time of this agreement, Harris was likely around seventy-five years old and owned a farm valued at \$1250. Harris sought out the assistance of a younger slave seller, Wilson W. Williams, who was around forty in 1851.⁸⁷

The foregoing examples illustrate the flexibility that masters had over their property; specifically, using slaves a way to settle debts or obtain a sliver of profit before an elderly master died. However, the outright sale of slaves in antebellum America also typified the slave regime, particularly the slave auction. For example, local constables – at the behest of a justice of the peace – advertised the sale of slaves in the surrounding areas of the county. John Evans, one of the constables of Pasquotank County in 1831, wrote that he succeeded in advertising for the sale of James Carver’s slaves Abraham and Stephen “at sundry publick... places in said county.”⁸⁸ The public gathered at Elias Carver’s house on May 15 and saw the “rite and title” of James Carver’s claim to Abraham and Stephen. Once the bidding commenced, Jacob Riddick “did appear and bid for negro man Abraham twenty-five dollars and for negro man Stephen twenty

⁸⁶ Bill of sale, September 11, 1852, Pasquotank County Records of Slaves and Free Persons of Color, (075.928.9).

⁸⁷ In 1850, the Slave Schedules documented Harris as the owner of three slaves – one male (aged fifty years), and two females (forty and seven years old, respectively). It is likely that the unnamed male and older female are indeed Jesse and Susan. 1850 United States Federal Census and Slave Schedules, Pasquotank, North Carolina.

⁸⁸ Bill of Sale, May 15, 1835, Pasquotank County Records of Slaves and Free Persons of Color, (075.928.9).

dollars which was the last and highest bids... for either or all of said negroes.”⁸⁹ Thus, for a miniscule price of \$45, Abraham and Stephen then belonged to Jacob Riddick – a resident of neighboring Perquimans County – who increased his slave population from five in 1830 to twelve in 1840.⁹⁰

Auctions were just one of many ways planters and merchants obtained slaves in antebellum America. For example, considering the Albemarle’s relative isolation and unequal slave ownership distribution, deeds and wills also served fundamental roles as tools that transferred bondspeople from one master to another. Usually, immediate relatives, such as husbands and wives, children, and brothers or sisters received mention in the wills of the property-holding class of antebellum society. Furthermore, family members or friends did not necessarily need to wait for someone to pass in order to acquire real or personal property. Often, members that could afford to do so gave away property free of charge. Analyzing these documents reveals to historians that many slaves did not have a numerical value ascribed to them.

Edmund Brinkley became ill around March 1853 when he wrote his last will and testament. At that time, Brinkley owned a substantial amount of crops. To his soon-to-be widowed wife Susannah, Brinkley left “fifty barrels of Corn, three thousand pounds fodder... twenty bushels peas, thirty bushels wheat, fifteen hundred pounds pork, one thousand herrings, six bushels salt, twenty gallons molasses, one hundred pounds sugar, fifty pounds coffee.”⁹¹ Brinkley divided his various land tracts to his children and to his wife. Previously, Brinkley

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ 1830 United States Federal Census, Perquimans, North Carolina.

⁹¹ Will of Edmund Brinkley, March 18, 1853; Albert Morris Collection (#19), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

bought 63.5 acres of land from Alexander Parish for \$1,000 in 1823⁹², and 106 acres for \$130 from William and Humphrey Wright in 1832.⁹³ Susannah Brinkley also received her husband's "negro woman Harriet," while his daughters Susan and Martha then owned "boy Jim, to be hired out until he is sixteen years of age."⁹⁴

John Cox of Currituck County, North Carolina had similar stipulations for his dependents. To his daughter Francis, Cox loaned "the plantation called by the name of Luffman place and the following Negroes... old Peter, Hannibal, and Nanny."⁹⁵ Additionally, Cox loaned another plantation and seven slaves to his other daughter Sarah. However, the third condition was similar but also different from the other slave bequests: "I Give and bequeath unto my son John Cox in the following property... Negro Williams, Elick, Wilson, Major, Assinah, Boston, Lewis, Harrell, and 3 children (to wit) Susan, Josephen, John and her future increase hereafter to him and his heirs forever."⁹⁶ Notably, Cox literally deeded eleven slaves, not including the black bodies yet to be born, yet he did not "give" or "bequeath" his other slaves to his daughters. This trend also extended to his daughters Anne E. Mercey, who received "the following property... Negro Isiah, Jeremiah, and George."⁹⁷ Likely, the daughters (Francis, Sarah, and Anne E. Mercey) had to return the slaves to their father's executors after a set amount of time passed, probably because they were unable to own property as single women in this time.

Similarly, James Leigh used the same terminology in his February 1854 will for distributing property to his grandchildren, both male and female. For his grandson Richard Blount, Leigh loaned "during his [Richard's] natural life the following negroes viz. Old man

⁹² July 4, 1888 copy of 1823 land indenture; Albert Morris Collection (#19).

⁹³ July 4, 1888 copy of 1832 land indenture; Albert Morris Collection (#19).

⁹⁴ Will of Edmund Brinkley, March 18, 1853; Albert Morris Collection (#19).

⁹⁵ Will of John Cox, undated; Cox Collection, Museum of the Albemarle, Division of State History Museums, North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Elizabeth City, North Carolina.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

Will, man Jefferson and his wife Peggy, young Esther and her child and boy Ambrose.”⁹⁸

Furthermore, Leigh’s granddaughter Martha Blount received a plot of land 720 acres in total and ten slaves – including two children – via loan from her soon-to-be-deceased grandfather. James Leigh also loaned several slaves to his daughter Martha Newby. Upon Newby’s death, the “named property negroes which I [Winslow] have loaned to my daughter Martha to be equally divided between her two children Richard & Martha to them and their heirs forever.”⁹⁹

Examination of wills and deeds clearly illustrates an important avenue slaveowners utilized to transfer their human chattel to the next generation. In short, many slaves and their descendants were the property of the same white family into perpetuity.

Slaves also became easily moved via unique bills of sale. For little or no cash, some enslavers sold their property to family or close friends. On March 24, 1831, an elder slave man, Isaac was sold for the miniscule amount of \$1. Isaac, who also went under the name of Isaac Hosia, was around sixty years old and his advanced age (for a slave) probably factored into his low value and purchase price.¹⁰⁰ On August 3, 1842, Margaret Stokely of Pasquotank County gave Rachel – a slave girl aged about thirteen years of age – “for the good will and love and affection... to [her] sister Emma Sayer.”¹⁰¹ As an addendum to this sale, the teenage girl also carried with her a value on her “future increase,” yet this had no bearing on whether or not money changed hands. William Walker’s actions on April 27, 1847 illustrate the ease with which some slaves moved to another owner:

Know all men by these presents that I have given and granted and do hereby give and grant unto my son in law Thomas Jefferson Cooper one negro slave girl or woman Ede

⁹⁸ Will of James Leigh, February 1854; Leigh & Winslow Family Papers (#4028), Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

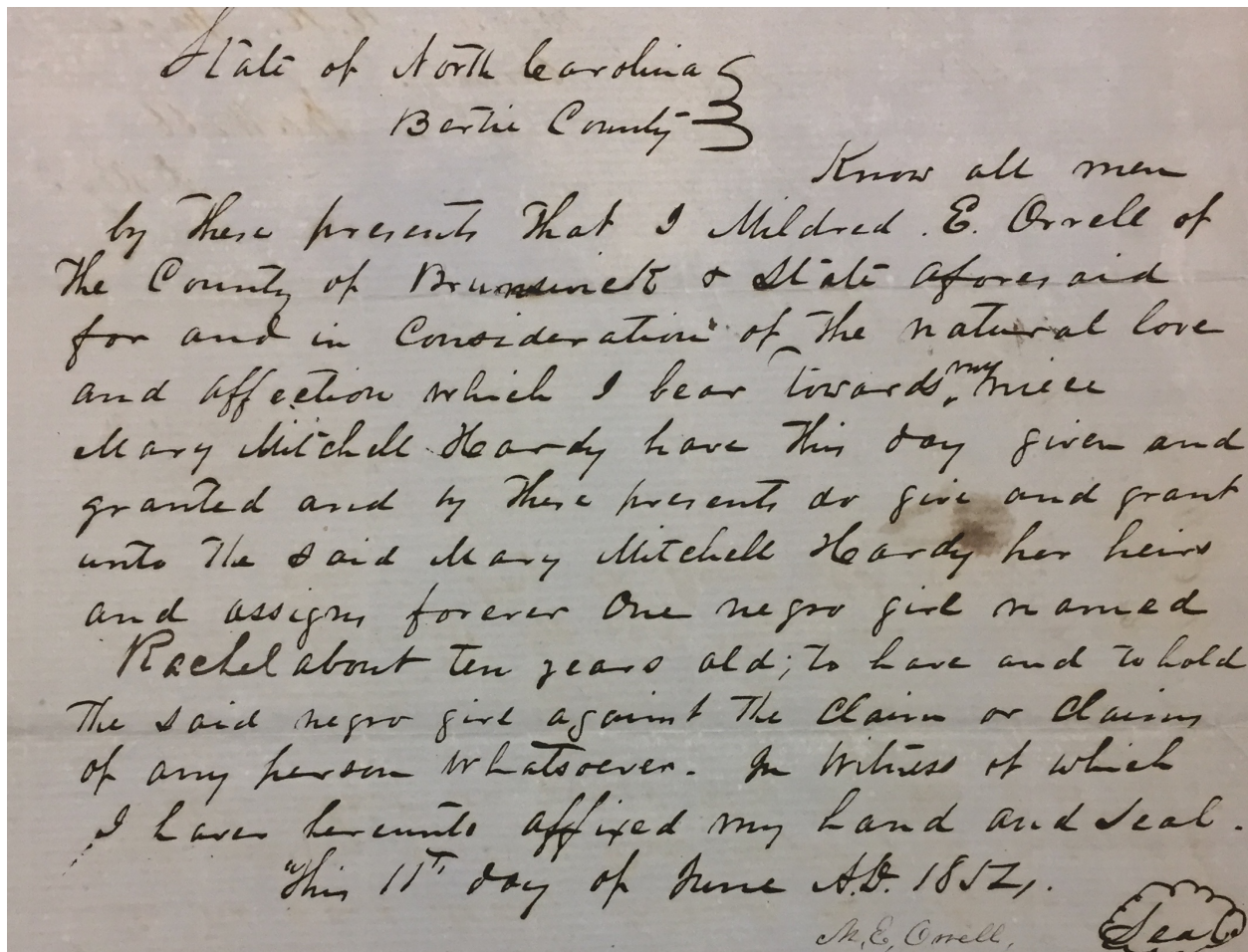
⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Bill of Sale, March 24, 1831; Pasquotank County Records of Slaves and Free Persons of Color (075.928.9)

¹⁰¹ Deed of Gift, August 3, 1842; Pasquotank County Records of Slaves and Free Persons of Color (075.928.9)

about nineteen years old. To have and to hold to said Thomas Jefferson Cooper, his heirs & assigns forever, witness my hand and seal this 27 April 1847. – Wm. Walker. Seal.¹⁰²

The formulaic construction of bills of sale not only was a sign of the times, but it also shows an established tradition of slave gifting and lending. Note the following example that shows Mildred E. Orrell of Bertie County gave her niece an adolescent slave.



State of North Carolina }
Bertie County }
Know all men
by these presents that I Mildred E. Orrell of
the County of Brunswick & State aforesaid
for and in consideration of the natural love
and affection which I bear towards ^{my} niece
Mary Mitchell Hardy have this day given and
granted and by these presents do give and grant
unto the said Mary Mitchell Hardy her heirs
and assigns forever one negro girl named
Rachel about ten years old; to have and to hold
the said negro girl against the claim or claims
of any person whatsoever. In witness of which
I have hereunto affixed my hand and seal.
This 11th day of June A.D. 1852.
M. E. Orrell, Seal

IMAGE 1.1: Deed of Gift, June 11, 1852; Slave Collection (PC1629.8), State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Gifted and selling slaves cheaply in the Albemarle lasted until the eve of the American Civil War. One unique example includes the indenture between Elisha Eason and J.W. Albertson in 1860. This document was an amalgamation of previous examples: part financial receipt, and

¹⁰² Deed of Gift, April 27, 1847; Tyrrell County, Records of Slaves and Free Persons of Color (096.928.3).

part deed of gift to a relative. Eason – under the “consideration of the natural love and affection” she held to her sister – desired to have a cash exchange with Albertson for several slaves and other property. For just \$10, J.W. Albertson obtained three named slaves, an unknown number of slave children “of negro woman Harrett,” and house furnishing.¹⁰³

Guardians of minors also utilized different avenues of slave selling and purchasing: they needed to petition the local courts to obtain permission to sell slaves for their young charges. In the fall term of the Camden County court of Appeals and Pleas, C. Chamberlain acted as the guardian for Pherebee E. McPherson, an “infant petitioner.” To allow Chamberlain the ability to sell McPherson’s slave – a man by the name of Carey – several witnesses needed to make a testimony before the county clerk, Jos. P. Gordan, Benjamin Jones, Ira E. Pearce, and Henry Chamberlain that they were familiar with Carey. Furthermore, they stated that “the infant petitioner would be mutually [or maturely] benefitted by a sale of said slave.”¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, the presiding judge added that the “interest of the petitioner would be greatly advanced by a sale of the said slave Carey.”¹⁰⁵

After obtaining permission from Camden County’s Superior Court, Chamberlain auctioned Carey “before the Court House Door on Tuesday the 28th of October... [and] that one William Glover appeared & bid the sum of seven hundred dollars, which was the highest & best big and he was declared the purchaser.”¹⁰⁶ But slavers also consulted with the local courts to establish a line a credit for purchasing slaves. John P. Williams of Bertie County submitted a plea to allow him to sell several slaves “on a credit of six months.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Indenture, April 16, 1860; Perquimans County Slave Records (077.928.2).

¹⁰⁴ Court petitions, October 28, 1851; Camden County Miscellaneous Records, (018.928.3), State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, North Carolina.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Court Petition, 1858; Winston Papers, (#963-z), Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Another interesting example of this process occurred during the fledgling years of the Civil War. James W. Mullen, guardian for Elizabeth H. Jacock, thought it was “necessary by the present state of affairs to remove or sell the negroes belonging to [his] said ward.”¹⁰⁸ Despite the growing concerns of slavery’s demise, Mullen found two men interested in purchasing Jacock’s “Negro man Bryant.” Mullen then found two additional men to affix a price upon Bryant. By the end of the transaction, Joseph G. Granbery and James C. Skinner paid \$550 for the twenty-five-year-old slave.

Religiosity in the Albemarle was another feature that moved slaves around the area. From its outset as an English colony, Carolina constantly waged a war against sects of Christianity that affronted the Anglican church. In particular, the Quakers of northeastern North Carolina proved to be a difficult group. To hasten settlement of the new colony, the Lords Proprietors created an atmosphere of religious toleration that attracted Quaker migrants. But this movement undermined the Anglicans of antebellum North Carolina because, generally, Anglicans were the large plantation and slaveowners of the region. Furthermore, the geographic isolation that early colonists encountered in the Albemarle further deepened vicissitudes of isolationism and reluctance toward wealthier Europeans. All this said, the first Quakers to migrate to the Albemarle arrived around 1672 and experienced ups-and-downs in a society that utilized chattel slavery and conflict, major antitheses for the Society of Friends.¹⁰⁹

However, there were still a significant number of Quakers in North Carolina that held slaves. As early as 1776, North Carolina Quakers agreed that slavery was immoral and contrary to their religious doctrine. The Friends met immediate opposition, however, when the General

¹⁰⁸ Bill of sale, October 21, 1862; Perquimans County Slave Records.

¹⁰⁹ Jonathan Edward Barth, “‘The Sinke of America’: Society in the Albemarle Borderlands of North Carolina, 1663-1729,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 87, no. 1 (Jan., 2010): 3, 6, and 22.

Assembly of North Carolina prohibited manumission. Despite this ruling, many Quakers continued to free slaves in addition to finding legal and ethical loopholes to retain their property through other means. But for a Friend to sell slaves outright, hire them out to others, “or otherwise profited from slave labor, risked disownment by their month meeting.”¹¹⁰

One way that “Friends could escape the onus of slaveholding”¹¹¹ stemmed from a vague bill written in 1796 by the legislature. In short, religious organizations and people obtained the ability to grant any type of “gift” to a trustee of their choice, which provided a legal course of action for North Carolina’s Quakers to rid themselves of their slaves. However, Friends hesitated to adopt this process. Nevertheless, by 1814, Quakers of the state moved approximately 350 of their slaves in this way.¹¹² A typical trustee document had similar language to that deeds of gifts. The same “love and affection” that fathers and mothers felt towards their relatives was the same tone the Friends used to avoid disownment and rejection from their congregation. One such example of this method shows seven Quaker slaveowners and as many slaves in 1830. At that time, Joseph Parks, William Wilson, and Anderson Morrey were the trustees of the Quaker community.

¹¹⁰ Peter Kent Opper, “North Carolina Quakers: Reluctant Slaveholders,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 52, no. 1 (Jan., 1975): 37-38.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹¹² Opper cites that the number of trustee slaves increased to 450 by 1822, and 729 in 1826, *Ibid.*

State of North Carolina I know all men by these presents
 Pasquotank County that we Aaron White Edmund
 White Joseph M White Alfred White Calib White Daniel
 Tisdale & Joseph Elliott, for & in consideration of the love
 & affection which we have & do bear towards the Society of
 friends or People denominated Quakers in the State of said
 & for divers other good causes & considerations here hereunto
 moving, hath given granted assigned, transferred & set over
 unto Joseph Parker William Wilson & Anderson Morris
 & other Trustees for said Society, All our right, title,
 interest & property of & in certain Negroes, viz Pleasant aged
 about fifty years, Dolly aged about fourteen years, Aaron aged
 about eleven years Josiah aged about eight years, Ann aged
 about sixteen years Julia aged about four years & Mary aged
 about eight months To have & to hold the said negroes to
 them & their successors in office for the use & protection
 of said friends called Quakers forever, And we the
 said Aaron White Edmund White Joseph M White Alfred
 White Calib White Daniel Tisdale & Joseph Elliott, for our
 selves, our heirs, executors or administrators doth by these
 presents warrant & forever defend unto the Trustees aforesaid
 & their successors in office all our right, title & interest in &
 to the aforesaid negroes against the claim or claims of every
 person or persons claiming through by from or under us
 or either of us whatsoever forever In Witness whereof
 we have hereunto set our hands & seals this 1 day of 5 mo 1830
 Signed sealed & acknowledged
 in presence of
 acknowledged before
 John H. Carrington (Just)

Aaron White
 Edmund White
 Joseph M White
 Alfred White
 Calib White
 Daniel Tisdale
 Joseph Elliott

IMAGE 1.2: Deed of Gift, Quaker Transfer, May 1, 1830; Pasquotank County Records of Slaves and Free Persons of Color (075.928.9)

This effort, in coordination with the North Carolina Manumission Society and the American Colonization Society, demonstrate that the Quakers of America were at the forefront of abolition,

in addition to setting aside colonies for the slaves in North Carolina. John Hope Franklin stated that “ownership,” even temporary, of slaves by Quakers afforded “virtual freedom.”

Furthermore, he stated that “the Negroes who were under the care of the Quakers received the rudiments of education, enjoyed relaxed rules regarding their movements, and often hired out their own time.”¹¹³ Regardless to the degree to which Quaker owners treated slaves, the fact remains that manumission via gifts to trustees did move black bodies across the region, and as a consequence, African-Americans often became valued as people and not as property.

Perhaps the best source to understand slave valuation is to investigate estate records. Depending on the history of the particular estate, slaveowners made lists of their chattel property at various points over the years. The information that survives for the researcher is especially important and includes the following: names and ages of slaves (such as “woman/man” and/or numerical ages), family groups, particular skills, and farm assignments if the slaveowner possessed several separate properties. Planters, administrators and executioners called for a plantation’s appraisal of slaves for various reasons, including: documenting the slaver’s tax rate, dividing an estate amongst a slaveowner’s children, medical assessments, and any other reason.

According to Stamp:

There were virtually no restrictions upon the owner’s right to deed his bondsmen to others.... In devising his chattels a testator had the power to divide them among his heirs in any way he saw fit—including the power to dissolve families for the purpose of making an equitable distribution.¹¹⁴

Furthermore, slaves distributed in this fashion were considered as a line of credit for many purchasers, in addition to settling debts of the deceased.¹¹⁵ It is important to note that these

¹¹³ John Hope Franklin, “Slaves Virtually Free in Ante-Bellum North Carolina,” *The Journal of Negro History* 28, no. 3 (Jul., 1943): 299.

¹¹⁴ Stamp, *Peculiar*, 199.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 201.

sources documented the perceived value of a slave, not their market value. As noted by Berry, public or private “sell prices were often higher than appraisal prices due to the nature of competitive transactions, such as auction sales.”¹¹⁶ However, these two spheres of slave valuation need to be examined together to tangibly understand the variations in price and value that slaves had in the Albemarle.

Thomas Thompson of Bertie County divided a substantial number of slaves on January 1, 1830 to his sons Hezikiah and Lewis. Thomas took great effort to precisely divide a total of seventy-two slaves so neither son obtained more valued property than the other. In order to accomplish this, the Thompsons separated the slaves based on sex and age into the following groups: men, boys, women, and girls. Additionally, children belonging to two women slaves are notated in the margins. By the conclusion of this process, the total value of the slaves rendered to Lewis and Hezikiah were \$8,050 and \$8,225, respectively.¹¹⁷

Generally, the men and boys divided to Hezikiah and Lewis were equal in terms of their perceived value. For example, the total males given to Hezikiah were eighteen at a total valuation of \$4,535, making the average valuation of male slaves at that time \$251.39. Similarly, Lewis obtained seventeen male slaves valued at \$4,425, with an average of \$260.29.

but also leaves other questions unanswered because the source lacks the variable data that other plantation records include.

¹¹⁶ Berry, *Price*, 41.

¹¹⁷ Division of 72 slaves, January 1, 1830; Lewis Thompson Papers (#716), Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Lewis Thompson		Hezekiah Thompson	
Peter	450	Jacob	500
Nathan	450	Anthony	450
Richmond	400	David	400
Harry	400	Neptune	400
Sam	450	(36) Harry	450
Anthony	300	Isaac	325
Hardy	300	Luke	250
Nathan	300	Samuel	300
Willis	150	Leah	50
	= 3150		= 3125

IMAGE 1.3: List of enslaved “men” divided between the Thompson brothers. Note that Hezekiah’s Harry was black and valued at \$450, while Lewis’ Harry is likely mixed and worth \$400. Division of 72 slaves, January 1, 1830; Lewis Thompson Papers (#716), Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Consideration of the female slave population finds more variation between the valuations and corresponds to which slave went to which master. While Lewis became the master to twenty new female slaves valued at \$3,525, it appears that Hezekiah received the better deal in terms of slave value received: Hezekiah gained eighteen female slaves with an average valuation of \$211.11, while Lewis’s females were substantially less valuable at \$176.25.¹¹⁸ In short, Lewis Thompson obtained more slaves than his brother, yet it seems that there was some compromise: Hezekiah obtained the more valuable property. Thomas Thompson’s division of his slaves is insightful because it also shows some degree to family separation as well.

Milly	300	Pat	325	White	
Rose	325	Rose	325		
Sally	150	Lettie	175		
b. Rose	200	Phillis	300		
Lu. Rose	200	Mimmy	250		
Pat	325	Penny	325		
Rincy	325	Sally	250	young white	
Charlot	325	Aggy	250		
Tanny	225	Missy	250		
Phillis	150	Cherry	225		
Cozy	50	Nancy	75		
	= 3575	Tilly	200		= 3025

IMAGE 1.4: Note that Rose, upper left-hand side, received a value exactly the same to “L.[ittle?] Rose,” upper right-hand side, who was probably her daughter or another relative. Division of 72 slaves, January 1, 1830; Lewis Thompson Papers (#716), Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Additional valuations provided by Lewis Thompson revealed more information of slave valuations over a decade later. On December 12, 1843, Thompson served as the evaluator for Mr. Martha B. Clark, his mother-in-law, and her estate. Thompson compiled an extensive list of nearly one hundred slave valuations, in addition to differentiating slave families and noted slaves that were highly skilled. For example, what is likely a singular family unit, Stephen, a fifty-year-old blacksmith, was worth \$450, while Cris, who was 30, was worth \$250. Younger children Sarah, Whitmill, and Ned fetched prices not exceeding \$250. Additionally, similar to the example from 1830, Thompson again included information of newborns and their included values with their mother. Lidda was likely mother to seven children at the time of this valuation, and her youngest child was Peyton, who was born less than a year earlier. Given the child's young age, it was customary for the mother and child to be considered as a singular unit for valuation. Lidda and Peyton fetched the same price as their middle-aged father Watson, \$300.

Certain individual slaves appraised by Lewis Thompson show another dark side of slave valuation. Thompson found that Clark's slaves were worth just under \$20,000. However, that was before he made deductions for what he called the "invalids." Out of the 96, Thompson devalued four slaves: "Prince, 26, 150 to maintain. . . . Old Ben, 84, 100\$ to maintain. King, 70, 100\$ to maintain. Nannie, 80, 100\$ to maintain."¹¹⁹ After deducting these negative amounts, the value allotted to Mrs. Clark's nine shares amounted to \$2,134. It was fairly common for elderly slaves to develop significant medical conditions such as cancer, rheumatism, and severe cases of pneumonia and consumption.¹²⁰ With this background, the valuations for Old Ben, King, and Nannie are easy enough to decipher. However, Prince's unknown status leaves much to be

¹¹⁹ Valuation of slaves belonging to Mrs. Martha B. Clark, December 12, 1843; Lewis Thompson Papers (#716).

¹²⁰ Berry, *Price*, 140.

desired. In practice, his or her relative youth would not equate to an extreme cost of maintenance, so it seems likely that Prince suffered from some type of mental deficiency. As Stampp pointed out, some slaveowners considered their slaves to be mentally unsound, yet, the plantation regime still found some sort of profitability for these slaves.¹²¹ However, this does not seem to be the case for Prince, who cost more to maintain as a young adult than did the elderly slaves on the plantation.

However, the overall trends of Thompson’s appraisal of Clark’s slaves are straightforward and somewhat predictable. On average, males received a valuation around \$40.00 higher than women, while a mother and child together were typically more valued than even males. For the six mother-and-child groups that Clark owned, they averaged a valuation of \$366.67, well above the \$245.26 valuation of male slaves. Additionally, the four skilled workers, Pompey, George, Stephen, and Silas averaged a valuation of \$331.25. All others, including females, averaged a value of \$226.68. As expected, as a slave aged through life, their valuation also changed. Starting in infancy, Clark’s slaves were worth just under one-hundred dollars, but as they matured into younger children, their worth increased even more.

**Valuation of Martha B. Clark's Slaves, appraised by
Lewis Thompson on December 12, 1843**

Slave Age Descriptor	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Infant	94.29	7	17.66
Child	161.05	19	40.84
Boy/Girl	332.06	17	50.38
Man/Woman	245.74	42	143.55
Total	231.60	85	125.54

TABLE 1.1: The “invalids” are omitted in this example, along with one slave who had no value attributed to her.

¹²¹ Stampp, *Peculiar Institution*, 305.

However, the “man/woman” variable shows a slight decrease in slave valuations because Clark owned a substantial number of slaves who were considered elderly during their time. Once Clark’s slaves were at that age, their valuation significantly decreased. Berry thought this timeframe occurred once a slave aged over forty years.¹²² If this is the case, then Clark’s elderly slaves fetched an average valuation of \$135.84 per slave.

However, examination of an earlier estate valuation contradicts these findings to a certain degree. Sometime in 1820, Mrs. Ann B. Pollock owned a large body of slaves and then divided them equally between Donald and William M. Clark; Donald received forty-nine slaves valued at \$20,325 while William had slightly more valuable slaves, at \$20,475 for the same number of slaves. A noticeable trend in this document shows a stark division of elderly and handicapped slave valuations. The only slaves worth literally nothing were men and women over the age of fifty and those with physical deficiencies. This was even the case for a five-year-old named Sucky and a middle-aged woman named Betty, both of which were handicapped in some form. Only one example strayed from this trend, “Cash a cripple, 58 yrs. – 200.”¹²³

Again, Lewis Thompson appraised a lot of slaves, this time the property of William M. Clark, his father-in-law. Probably around 1850, Thompson surveyed the values of eleven slave families who numbered from a single-person member to nine total family members. This listing of slave values further exemplifies the divergent variables that make up a slave’s perceived worth. Once again, appraisers and planters used age, sex, skill level, and physical and mental capabilities as predominate factors to determine worthiness and value.

Isaac, Clark’s slave, was one of the three most valued slaves at \$1,000. Even though Isaac was of a fairly old age at that time – fifty-four – Clark likely highly prized him because of

¹²² Berry, *Price*, 130.

¹²³ Division of 99 slaves, circa 1820; Lewis Thompson Papers (#716).

his ability as a blacksmith. Contrast his case with that of Betty, who was likely Isaac’s wife. Two years his junior, Betty was only worth \$5.00 because she was an “invalid.” Another slave, Violet, had a valuation that greatly reflected her physical status as a “cripple.” As a twenty-four-year-old woman, Lewis Thompson – and to some degree, Clark possibly had some input on the matter – saw Violet as worth \$100, substantially lower than other females Clark owned. Nancy, one year older, was worth seven times Violet’s value.¹²⁴ Furthermore, Clark’s slaves in adolescence averaged a slightly higher valuation than those of men and women aged twenty to forty. Thompson’s valuation of Clark’s slaves also followed along a similar trend toward women, who were valued at \$150 less than men (see Appendix 1.1).

Often times, however, many estate records do not provide enough information to come to these conclusions. The Tyrrell County Court divided six slaves between Mary Phelps and Nelson and Mrs. Alexander on March 20, 1835. To determine the proper division of slaves, the total valuation of the slaves was \$1,7000, therefore, each party was to receive \$850 in valued slaves.

Woman Annis Native	at 350
Girl Paty	" — 375
Boy Aaron	" — 375
Girl Sarnes	" ... 250
Boy Ben	" .. 200
" Gilbert	" — 150
1,700 the half of which each receive \$850	

IMAGE 1.5: Division of slaves, March 20, 1835; Tyrrell County Records of Slaves and Free Persons of Color (096.928.3), State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Additionally, the appraisal of William B. Wynns’ slaves reveal similar problems. This time, however, there were seldom cases of slaves characterized by age descriptors such as “boy/girl”

¹²⁴ Valuation of 38 slaves, circa 1850; Lewis Thompson Papers (#716).

or “man/woman.” Wynns died at the start of 1841, and whoever itemized his slaves stated that seventy-one slaves totaled a valuation of over \$20,000.¹²⁵ Wynn’s three most valued slaves were, unsurprisingly, men. However, “Rose & children Abbey & Oscar” were valued at a substantial amount, \$625.¹²⁶ The values of Wynns’ slave families were substantially more valuable than a singular female, and approached the value ascribed to Wynns’ male slaves.¹²⁷

Wynns apparently took steps to avoid dividing up his slave families. Upon settlement of his estate, his widow received sixteen slaves and the remaining to his sons Thomas and James. Rose stayed with her children while enslaved with Mrs. Wynns, in addition to other mother and children groups that remained together, while also becoming the property of other individuals. Additionally, a likely father and son duo, “Dred” and “Little Dred,” become the joint property of Thomas and James Wynns.¹²⁸

Slaves in the Albemarle constantly received values on their perceived output and production. Even during the Civil War, slaves were valued, though, as a direct result of the labor lost to a planter. From March to May of 1862, C. W. Hollowell – James C. Johnston’s agent – valued twenty-two of Johnston’s slaves that the Union took “from Poplar Plains.”¹²⁹ These included two mothers and their children. It seems likely that this valuation hinged on the belief that the federal government would reimburse Johnston for his newly-freed slaves. This, in tandem with the highly stratified values Johnston’s slaves’ received, attest to an understanding that the true bill of sale value was irrelevant; value was in the eye of the slaveholder.

¹²⁵ Valuation of William B. Wynns’ slaves, circa 1841; Murfreesboro Historical Association Collection, Wynns Family Papers (691-002.11.b), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ The six slave families belonging to William B. Wynns averaged a valuation of \$341.67, while his eighteen females were worth \$243.06, and thirty-one men at \$407.58.

¹²⁸ Valuation, circa 1841; Wynns Family Papers (691-002.11.b).

¹²⁹ Ledger, page 47; Hollowell Family Papers (#578.2.a), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

Hollowell noted the values of Johnson's slaves in direct concert with farm implements, food, fodder, and cattle. Additionally, the federal troops accrued an amount of \$20.00 "damage done to furniture" on January 10, 1863.¹³⁰ The Union soldiers also paid Hollowell to use mules, carts, horses, and bridles and saddles throughout February 1863. The soldiers likely used Johnston's property to assist in transporting supplies, but ultimately, Hollowell received the financial payments by the end of the month, and Johnston got his property in return.¹³¹

This however, does not seem to be the case for Johnston's human property. Hollowell's ledger included the perceived and abstract valuation of at least sixty-five slaves, nearly six out of ten being male.¹³² Much like in other records – including bills of sale and runaway advertisements – slavers used vague terms to describe the ages of their property. Hollowell used either the estimated numerical age of the slaves or their descriptor (boy/girl/man/woman), but hardly did he use both. Only one case – "negro Boy Joe aged 19"¹³³ – received both variables.

From the first of Union invasion on Johnston's property, each of the slaves received a value until July 30, 1864, when Hollowell simply wrote the name of the slaves Johnston lost as contraband. Overall, Hollowell valued Johnston's male slaves at a substantially rate, especially considering the Albemarle's restricted and localized slave trade. According to Hollowell, female slaves were worth over \$250 less than males. Additionally, the two family units received significantly high appraisals,¹³⁴ even though neither group had male head of house. As expected, Hollowell's valuation of Johnston's slaves tended to increase as the slave aged. However, the more substantial increase occurred between a slave "child" and a slave "boy or girl," not once

¹³⁰ Ledger, page 56; *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Distinguishing gender in this record is somewhat difficult. Some examples include descriptives such as "negro boy," however, this is not always the case. The historian is generally given just the slave name, sometimes an age, but always a valuation. Therefore, notating gender relies on identification via just the slave's name.

¹³³ Ledger, page 58; Hollowell Family Papers (#578.2.a).

¹³⁴ \$2,000 and \$800.

Hollowell considered the slave a “man” or “woman.”¹³⁵ This aspect of enslaved life in American constituted just one avenue that black bodies became commodified under the watchful eyes of white planters, merchants, and businessmen.

Late in life, Nelson M. Ferebee recounted his upbringing as the only son to the famous Confederate colonel, lawyer, and political leader, Dennis Dozier Ferebee.¹³⁶ Nelson spoke highly of the slaves under the yoke of his father, a man who owned a number of plantations in the Albemarle and Virginia. For example, Nelson stated that unfair treatment and beatings of slaves was infrequent on his father’s land:

undoubtedly there were instances of cruel treatment of slaves, but such could only be at most frequent exceptions to the general rule of kind treatment. The instincts of humanity and the dictates of policy required that the slave should be kindly treated.¹³⁷

Furthermore, he directly stated that enslavers and slaves alike followed a “rule” of friendship. The overall tone of Nelson’s memoir is rich with ideals of southern paternalism that served to justify slavery, especially after the Civil War subsided. This ideology directly affected how Nelson Ferebee related his memory of separated slave families. While relatively young at the time of the war,¹³⁸ the young master remembered that “the bitterest hardship in the life of the slave was the separation of husband and wife or parents and children by the sale or death of the owner.”¹³⁹ Nelson related an anecdotal memory of the “valiant” efforts of his father to keep a slave family together as a cohesive unit.

A slave named David, who was a prized fox-hunter, was husband and father to other chattels on a nearby plantation. Just before the first shots on Fort Sumter, David’s wife and

¹³⁵ Average valuations included: children, \$275; boys and girls, \$866.67; men and women, \$913.04.

¹³⁶ Jesse Forbes Pugh, *Three Hundred Years Along the Pasquotank: A Biographical History of Camden County* (Durham, N.C.: Seeman Printery, 1957), 147-156.

¹³⁷ Memoir, page 3; Nelson M. Ferebee Papers (#404.1.a).

¹³⁸ Nelson McPherson Ferebee was born on April 16, 1849 in Camden County, North Carolina.

¹³⁹ Memoir, page 3; Nelson M. Ferebee Papers (#404.1.a).

children were set to be auctioned off after their master passed. David and Dennis Ferebee attended the estate auction, where Nelson's father "promised to buy them."¹⁴⁰ While there, the duo encountered a rival purchaser, a person Nelson described as a "'nigger buyer'." According to Nelson Ferebee, the aim of this mysterious man was to drive up the price of the auction to avoid competition, and successfully send the family to the cotton states of the lower south. During the course of the auction, "David saw this as he stood by with tears running down his face, yet his trust in Master's promise never wavered."¹⁴¹ Thus, according to his son, Dennis Ferebee reunited David and his family for the astronomically high price of eleven-thousand dollars. This price had to be paid in installments that only stopped after the conclusion of the American Civil War.

Nelson remembered this event by once again painting a portrait of a gracious slave and the valiant efforts of their owner to be a good model to inferior people. For example, Nelson Ferebee stated the only repayment his father received was "the lasting gratitude David and his entire family."¹⁴² When David grew old and weary, "stricken in years," his only request was to be buried at the feet of Dennis Ferebee, who died in 1884.¹⁴³ While this story more than likely includes inflated numbers, in addition to no manuscript evidence supporting Nelson's claim, it suggests something rather interesting. Nelson Ferebee, while clearly paternalistic, provides an understanding of the role that slave families and other slave units played in the economics of slavery in the Albemarle region of North Carolina. For example, examination and analysis of manuscript evidence of Ferebee's contemporaries suggest that Albemarle slaveowners did attempt to retain slave families together even on the auction block.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, page 4.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*.

¹⁴² *Ibid*.

¹⁴³ Pugh, *Three Hundred Years*, 147.

Similar to Dennis Ferebee's credited purchase of David's wife and children, Richard Hoskins, over three decades earlier, possibly sold a slave family for a large sum. On June 12, 1825, Hoskins, who likely was acting as the administrator of Charles Robert's estate, sold Jany and two children, Mary and John, for \$502 "@ 6 months credit" to Richard W. Bunbury. It is probable that a sale of numerous slaves at one time constitutes a family group. However, researchers have to rely on the terminology employed in each separate bill of sale or indenture. For example, Matthias Etheridge sold six slaves to Patrick Northern on September 25, 1833. The drafted indenture provided no descriptive information on the slaves – just their names – thus leaving researchers to speculate on the relationship of these slaves. Similarly, Lewis Pledger of Tyrrell County sold a woman "and two children by the name of Peter & Easter" for \$460 in 1846.¹⁴⁴ The difficulty of documenting slave genealogy leaves many questions unanswered given these vague and brief mentions in the archive. However, in isolated cases, slave families in the Albemarle stayed together even during purchase.

For instance, Joshua S. Twiddy sold his one-fourth share of Clarisa and her child Ann Eliza to his relative Thomas Twiddy. The very fact that partial ownership of this mother and daughter cost Thomas Twiddy \$140 shows contemporary slaveowners in the same location paid a hefty fee to maintain a slave family.¹⁴⁵ Additionally, the next year, Chowan county native and prominent planter and merchant Joseph Norcom paid a substantial amount for "a certain negro woman slave named Eliza... and her two children John & Emily aged about three years & fifteen months."¹⁴⁶ Eliza was also quite a young mother, only twenty-two years old. Norcom was able to purchase Eliza and her children because he owned, at that time, a substantial slave population, in

¹⁴⁴ Bill of sale, September 25, 1833; Cox Collection. Bill of Sale, February 10, 1846; Tyrrell County Records of Slaves and Free Persons of Color (096.928.2).

¹⁴⁵ Bill of sale, July 3, 1847; Tyrrell County Records of Slaves and Free Persons of Color (096.928.2).

¹⁴⁶ Bill of sale, December 11, 1848; Chowan County Miscellaneous Slave Records (024.928.33).

addition to a vast amount of real estate. According to 1850 census records, Norcom owned properties valued around \$9,000, while also being the master of thirty-one slaves.¹⁴⁷ So at first glance, it appears and seems logical for a slaveowner to justify the large expense of maintaining some sort of familiar connection among the slaves. However, outliers remain in all circumstances, especially when scholars consider that slavery at this time was a business.

On August 16, 1849, an interesting exchange of money occurred in Pasquotank County:

Known all men by these presents that we John J. Grandy and Daniel Richardson for and in consideration of the sum of one dollar to us paid by James T. Banks, and also in consideration of the terms being performed by said Banks, upon which the property herein after named was conveyed to us – we have bargained, sold, released and reconveyed & do by these presents bargain, sell, release and reconvey unto the said James T. Banks his heirs and assigns, all our right, title and interest in negro woman Milly and her three Children Harriet, Billy, and Margaret, also all interest in his house hold & kitchen furniture, horses, buggy & stock horse and said negros, said Banks to have properties... after the expiration of the present year for which term they are hired to Joseph A. Turner.¹⁴⁸

The motivations of Grandy and Richardson remain unclear. Surely, a loss of property – human chattel, real estate, goods and cattle – at this magnitude had underlying causes. Daniel Richardson appears to have been a wealthy merchant and farmer whose wealth and slaves greatly increased in the 1850s.¹⁴⁹ What is most probable is that Richardson and Grandy worked out an agreement not included on this bill of sale, nearly gifting Banks with a wealth of property for little out-of-pocket expense. This sale draws connections to the previously-mentioned method of gifting slaves cheaply or for no money at all.

Enslaved families continued to be purchased collectively in the years leading to the American Civil War, and also for a variety of prices. In 1853, Anthony W. Morgan sold a mother

¹⁴⁷ 1850 United States Federal Census and Slave Schedules, Chowan, North Carolina.

¹⁴⁸ Bill of sale, August 16, 1849; Pasquotank County Records of Slaves and Free Persons of Color (075.928.9).

¹⁴⁹ 1850 United States Federal Census and Slave Schedules, Pasquotank, North Carolina; 1860 United States Federal Census and Slave Schedules, Pasquotank, North Carolina.

and son to an interested buyer for ninety dollars,¹⁵⁰ while in the winter of 1855 James M. Wynns sold to his relative Thomas P. Wynns a “woman Jane... and her two children.” This slave was not only thrust into a life as piece of property, but Jane was just eighteen years old, already with a three-year-old daughter named Sarah Ellen and a child just five weeks old. The three fetched the significantly high price of \$1,025.¹⁵¹ Nearly a week prior to this purchase, James Wynns also sold eight other slaves for the great profit of \$2,712.¹⁵² A contemporary and Albemarle resident, Richard J. Veale purchased Sarah and two young slaves who were likely her children for the round sum of one thousand dollars.¹⁵³ Clearly, as secession loomed on the horizon, slave purchase prices constantly increased.

The Albemarle was no different in terms of the valuation slave families attained. While the following example does not give definitive proof of parentage toward the “children” mentioned in the bill of sale, it is likely that the three were related given the extremely high purchase price. Perry C. Tyler of Bertie County purchased “woman Malinda age[d] twenty-three years, and two children named Nancy & Esther” for nearly \$2,000.¹⁵⁴ Lewis Thompson sold to Thomas W. Thompson quite a large parcel of slaves in 1860. Included in this transaction were Harry Essy, Penny, and Isham, man, wife, and son. Four other slaves added to the valuation of these individuals, resulted in a total worth of \$6,700.¹⁵⁵ Even the outbreak of warfare did not

¹⁵⁰ Bill of sale, November 1853; Pasquotank County Records of Slaves and Free Persons of Color (075.928.9).

¹⁵¹ Bill of sale, December 10, 1855; Murfreesboro Historical Association Collection Wynns Family Papers (#691-002.8.c).

¹⁵² Bill of sale, December 1, 1855; Murfreesboro Historical Association Collection Wynns Family Papers (#691-002.8.c).

¹⁵³ Bill of sale, August 21, 1854; Veale Family Papers (#722.1.f), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

¹⁵⁴ Bill of sale, December 28, 1859; Tyler Family Papers #4810, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

¹⁵⁵ Bill of sale, February 17, 1860; Lewis Thompson Papers (#716).

stymie this trend. P. H. Winston Jr. paid \$2,505 for four slaves to stay together and likely rejoin Washington, Nelly's husband and father to the three children shown below.

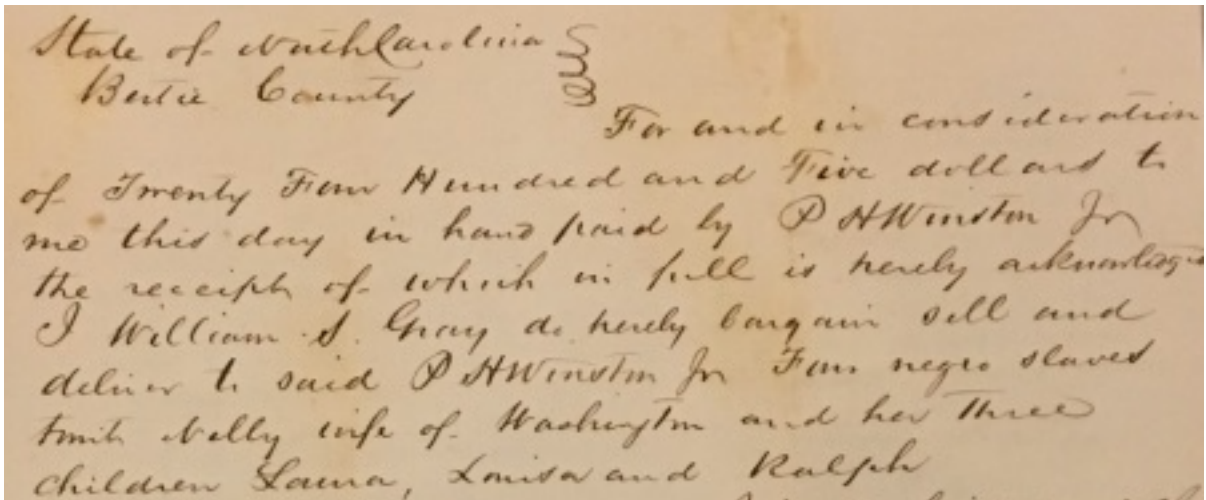


IMAGE 1.6: Bill of sale, November 11, 1862; Winston Papers, (#963-z).

Slavery and the slave trade in the Albemarle was relatively a local institution. Traders in the same or adjoining counties exchanged human chattel amongst themselves, rarely interacting with planters and merchants outside of the region, much less out of the state. Of 154 bills of sale and indentures that reflect the slave trade in the Albemarle (see Appendix 1.2), only one third detailed the exact location of the economic transfer. Geographic metrics of this sub-group reveal that, 75.9% of the time, both owners – the previous and purchasing owners – were Albemarle residents. The few cases that show some physical transportation of slaves into and from the Albemarle shows even fewer inter- and intra-state slave trades. Outside the counties of Hyde, Guilford (the furthest from the Albemarle), and Granville, slaves – even if traded and bought multiple times – remained more or less in the Albemarle region and, as a consequence, closer to their families. Additionally, the only state that showed interest in the Albemarle's slaves was Virginia, which is unsurprising given the close shipping relationship between Norfolk and the ports of Edenton, Elizabeth City, and Plymouth.

Additionally, women composed a significant number of the slaves bought and sold in the Albemarle. More than one in three slaves sold in the region were females of various ages, from two to seventy-five years old. While being fairly well represented, on average slaveowners in the Albemarle paid around \$180 less to purchase female slaves. As expected, as slaves matured they increased in valuation. For the specific bills of sale, slave children experienced a more drastic change in valuation when they matured into young boys or girls than did adolescents becoming adults.

Purchase date was most significant in changing the Albemarle's slave values (see Appendix 1.3). This seems logical given the rate of inflation and devaluation that went along with other commodity goods at the time. As stated by Stamp, "from the colonial period to the Civil War the general trend [of slave prices] was upward."¹⁵⁶ He also noted that, while the Panic of 1837 resulted in a momentary decrease in slave prices, slave valuation increased in the 1840s, resulting in a great fervor of slave price inflation in the 1850s. Stamp argued that this phenomenon was due to the widespread concern enslavers had in the possible abolishment of the American slave system. But this explanation is the only cause for increased prices. It also deeply reflects the profitability and enthusiasm slavers in the Deep South felt and experienced in with the major cash crops. Slavery – it has been widely agreed – was not on the brink of self-destruction or collapse on the eve of the Civil War.¹⁵⁷

Thus, the Albemarle illuminates this upward trend, even in a locality that enslaved their bondspeople differently than other regions and states. An examination of a region's intimate interaction with the peculiar institution lays bare the nuances and complexities of the slave system in America. Albemarle slaves became owned in a variety of ways, whether as a bequest

¹⁵⁶ Stamp, *Peculiar*, 415.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 416-418.

in a will, as a result of an estate settlement, a court petition made by a trustee of a minor, or an outright bill of sale to document a transaction. Each method employed a different form of valuation to calculate a slave's worth. This illustrates the complex network of ownership that antebellum America created in order to retain their human chattel. The paradox, of course, is that the act of owning someone was inherently simple at that time. Yet, plantation owners and traders increasingly relied upon the local courts, county administrators, and contemporaries to further deepen the Albemarle's slave regime. Once a slave became the property of an Albemarle resident, then the owner took on maintenance costs and other expenses to sustain their slaves.

CHAPTER TWO – “THE PRICE OF MAINTENANCE: EXAMINING THE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH SLAVE OWNERSHIP”

“I haven’t anything to say against slavery. My old folks put clothes on me when I was a boy. They gave me shoes and stockings and put them on me when I was a little boy.”¹⁵⁸

No matter the method that slaves became property, owners tasked themselves with providing adequate housing, food, and clothing to their slaves. This, of course, varied from owner to owner, and slave narratives are replete with anecdotes of poor treatment by the hand of the owner. Stamppp found that antebellum society thought the slave-owner dynamic required give and take on both parties. In short, the master gave slaves a place to live and food to eat; in return, slaves were the submissive and honest workers on the plantation. Furthermore, owners instructed their overseers to check for proper housing conditions and the overall cleanliness of the slaves. Doctors and nurses (most likely slaves themselves) formed a fundamental role as the body that sustained slavery in America.¹⁵⁹ Phillips also stated in simplistic terms that “the maintenance of the slave at the full rate required for the preservation of lusty physique was essential.”¹⁶⁰ By and large, the prudent slaveowner and businessman acknowledged that proper maintenance required a base line of capital, and if care dropped below that level, the owner could expect lower overall returns.¹⁶¹ This maintenance was the second step on the slave’s journey through property valuation.

The Albemarle had dozens of noted physicians and doctors who not only helped heal whites, but also tended to the slaves’ health on the plantation or farm. These men of science

¹⁵⁸ Page 210, *Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 2, Jackson-Yellerday*, 1941, retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn111/> (Accessed March 7, 2018).

¹⁵⁹ Stamppp, *Peculiar*, 279-282.

¹⁶⁰ Phillips, *American Negro*, 359.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

typically owned a number of slaves as well. Other physicians, such as John T. Lewter, supplemented their income by dealing in dry goods and other mercantile industries. Examination of these individuals, their backgrounds and the atmosphere of medical education at the time, helps explain an additional paradox of enslaved valuations. Physicians charged similar payments to treat slaves and free whites, alike. Given the underlying mentality of antebellum society that black bodies were inherently and fundamentally different (and inferior) to whites, physicians used the same procedures such as bleeding, purging, cupping, and blistering on a slaveowner and his property alike.

J. T. Lewter was one of “twenty-seven gentlemen from North Carolina, among 163 from other States” to receive a Doctorate of Medicine from the University of Pennsylvania in 1849.¹⁶² Lewter then moved home to North Carolina in Northampton County soon after his graduation. At that time, Lewter began practicing medicine and owned a property worth, according to the 1850 census, \$2,275.¹⁶³ Beginning in the next decade, Lewter gained a reputation as a physician throughout the state. In February of 1855, Dr. R. L. Cowper sued the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad company for \$25,000 because of “injuries received by a collision of the cars....”¹⁶⁴ Apparently, Cowper dealt with his injury for most of the year because not until December did J.T. Lewter assist Dr. Hutchings and remove “a portion of bone” from Cowper.¹⁶⁵ This well-documented case of Dr. Lewter’s medical care contrasts with the care he gave to slaves in the Albemarle.

¹⁶² *The Weekly Standard*, Raleigh, April 18, 1849.

¹⁶³ 1850 United States Federal Census, Northampton, North Carolina.

¹⁶⁴ *Semi-Weekly Standard*, Raleigh, December 22, 1855.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Lewter was also an accomplished yet modest local politician. A brief sketch of his life described: “few men in the land have ever been keener or more intelligent politicians.”¹⁶⁶ By 1860, Lewter relocated to Murfreesboro in Hertford County and greatly increased his personal property value to \$10,000, and even served as a militia colonel during the American Civil War.¹⁶⁷ Dr. Lewter continued to practice medicine after emancipation but he also advertised and sold merchandise and other dry goods. He offered an array of supplies including “Garden and Field Seeds,” and “Drugs & medicines, paints, oils... perfumery & fancy articles” at his shop “The New Drug Store.”¹⁶⁸ While practicing medicine in Hertford County, Lewter served as the family physician to many of the Albemarle’s residents, including John V. Lawrence.

Dr. Lewter treated Lawrence’s family and slaves from January of 1857 well into the Reconstruction period. Examination of just one of Lewter’s medical ledgers reveals that Lawrence’s slaves – Phillis, Rose, Peter, Mary, Margaret, Ellen, Bob, Charles, Andrew, Kate, and a “child” and “infant” – received medical care of comparable costs to that of the slaveowner himself. As stated by historians and contemporaries, enslavers had a vested interest in sustaining the life and “wellness” of their property. However, Dr. Lewter often did not include the precise procedures and medicines his white and black patients received. However, in isolated cases, Lewter used formulaic terminology to describe his services. For instance, in the first week of September 1857, Lewter charged Lawrence \$1.00 for “extracting [a] tooth for negro Peter” and Lawrence’s own son.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ *Historical Sketches of Hertford County*, 109.

¹⁶⁷ 1860 United States Federal Census, Hertford, North Carolina; *Historical Sketches of Hertford County*, 126, 136.

¹⁶⁸ *The Albemarle Enquirer*, Murfreesboro, January 17, 1878.

¹⁶⁹ Medical ledger, page 1; Murfreesboro Historical Association Collection J. T. Lewter Papers (#691-001.1.a), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

Furthermore, typical harsh or “heroic” treatment of the time stated that regulation of the body’s essential fluids alleviated symptoms and reduced an illness’ severity. Nevertheless, as stated by Stampp, “the state of ante-bellum medical science made it uncertain that even the most conscientious master would invariably prescribe better remedies than the superstitious slave healer.”¹⁷⁰ Stampp also found that some prescribed at-home remedies ranged from placing hare pelts on cancerous regions of the breasts, to a tonic mixture of plants, berries, and rusted nails to alleviate dropsy. The most common of treatments at this time, however, were bloodletting and purging. Utilizing lancets and other blades for this purpose – antebellum practitioners believed – rid the body of tainted blood and was the favorite for a variety of illnesses and symptoms. Stampp stated that the contemporary racist sentiments allowed for medical care to be not only similar but also dissimilar. To antebellum physicians, the slave was profoundly different and required special analysis as compared to the white race.¹⁷¹ However, the *de facto* mode of antebellum medical care saw slaves and owners treated with the same methods and ideologies. Thus, the background that slaves received medical care in antebellum America was highly divisive and, as a result, resulted in differing perceptions of treatment from the owner and slave.

George O. Askew, another physician from Bertie County, also owned a substantial number of slaves. In 1830, there were sixteen slaves on the Askew property, but this figure steadily increased in the following decades. According to the 1840 census, George Askew owned twenty slaves and, by 1850, that increased once again to twenty-seven slaves. At that time, Askew considered one of his slaves, a fifteen-year-old girl, “idiotic.”¹⁷² Dr. Askew died unexpectedly in a home fire in late April 1860.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Stampp, *Peculiar*, 307.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 307-309.

¹⁷² 1830, 1840, 1850, and 1850 Slave Schedules, United States Federal Census, Bertie, North Carolina.

¹⁷³ “Horrible Occurrence,” *The Citizen*, Murfreesboro, May 3, 1860.

Askew provided medical services to Willie Smith and his slaves. From 1846 to 1848, Smith accumulated a significant debt with Dr. Askew. The most expensive treatment was to repair the “fractured clavicle” of Smith’s “negro George.” Askew charged an astonishing ten dollars for this single visit. Askew also prescribed purging and quinine tablets to slaves and whites,¹⁷⁴ the former a popular treatment for various ailments and the latter a successful remedy to fend off malaria and other mosquito-borne illnesses. Even as late as 1914, physicians noted that, in their childhood, quinine formed an essential part of malarial prevention.¹⁷⁵

Another Albemarle physician received much notoriety for his political stances within the state. Dr. Richard Dillard, Sr. – though a Virginian by birth – lived much of his professional life in Chowan County, specifically, at Beverly Hall in Edenton.¹⁷⁶ At the time of his death in 1887, contemporaries considered Dr. Dillard “one of Edenton’s most prominent citizens”¹⁷⁷ and “a man of strong convictions, clear head, cool judgment.”¹⁷⁸

Dr. Dillard’s visits to James Cobb’s estate show the formulaic approach these physicians used to bill their patients: examinations of children (either white or black) typically cost twice as much as adult visitations. Dillard repeatedly visited Cobb to administer eye care to an unnamed female “negro.” This woman dealt with her malady from January 15, 1851, the first date of Dillard’s visit, until at least July 15.¹⁷⁹

Edward Leigh, guardian for minor James Leigh, sought medical care for slaves in 1855. Albemarle resident and physician R. H. McIntosh treated Leigh’s property the first half of the

¹⁷⁴ Medical expenses, 1846-1848, on account of Willie Smith, Veale Family Papers (#722.1.g).

¹⁷⁵ G. Canby Robinson, “Malaria in Virginia in the early nineteenth century,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 32, no. 6 (1958): 535.

¹⁷⁶ 1850 United States Federal Census, Hertford, North Carolina; 1860 United States Federal Census, Chowan, North Carolina; 1870 United States Federal Census, Chowan, North Carolina.

¹⁷⁷ *The Falcon*, Elizabeth City, December 2, 1887.

¹⁷⁸ *Windsor Ledger*, Windsor, December 7, 1887.

¹⁷⁹ Medical expenses to James Cobb Estate, October 1850 to July 1851, Richard Dillard Papers (#599.2.b).

year until Drs. Spruill and Cooke undertook treatment starting July 30.¹⁸⁰ Even though three practitioners treated Leigh's slaves, similar language threads itself through expense reports and the brief descriptions of medical care.

The slaves Isiah, Mariah Spence, Jim, "Boy Riley," George, "woman Jenny," and Sam received the dominate attention by Leigh and physicians.¹⁸¹ These slaves received much of the same treatment that doctors prescribed at this time, but records include that Jim and Sam contributed to the maritime commerce of the Albemarle. Both were located "at Sound" or "at Fishery" and doctors charged more to visit these slaves on the water. David Cecelski noted that slaves – especially older males – created a reputation for themselves via their skill in fishing, small watercraft maneuvering, and other maritime occupations on the coasts of North Carolina. Specifically, slaves that were skilled fishermen maintained an intrinsic "awareness of the tidal flow, lunar cycles, wind shifts, and seasons cycles of fishing."¹⁸² Sam, for instance, needed significant medical attention in August, no doubt his state resulted from his occupation in the marshy and humid landscape of the Albemarle.

Leigh's other slaves received treatment that directly reflected the seasonal changes in the antebellum south. "Boy Riley" and George only needed medical treatment by Drs. Spruill and Cooke in July and August of 1855. At the same time, Leigh paid for unnamed "medicine" and "quinine," likely to battle symptoms related to malaria. Mariah appeared to be drastically ill in March of 1855, when Dr. McIntosh charged four times his usual amount to visit a patient. After

¹⁸⁰ 1850 United States Federal Census, Gates, North Carolina; 1860 United States Federal Census, Pasquotank, North Carolina.

¹⁸¹ Records include the names "Jim," "Jim @ Sound," and "Jim Jackson at Fishery" and "Maria" and "Maria Spence." These are most likely differing descriptors of just two people. Medical expenses to Edward Leigh, 1855-1856, Leigh and Winslow Family Papers, (#4028.5).

¹⁸² Cecelski, *Watermen's*, 76.

three daily visits, Mariah seemingly recovered until October 1, when her owner requested a “night visit.” The resulting treatment to her unknown malady was cupping.¹⁸³

Gretchen Long points out that the harsh and highly violent treatments in the antebellum medical arena “were used almost exclusively by white practitioners.”¹⁸⁴ In other words, the slaves themselves became skeptical of these medical professionals and created an environment of fear. As a result, some slaves “refused” treatment from white doctors. Additionally, slaves recognized the interconnectedness of their physical bodies with their mental health, in addition to their owner’s outright ownership and treatment of their perceived faults. Slaveowners valued their property not only in terms of “soundness” of body, but also of mind.¹⁸⁵ The healthcare of the African slave in antebellum America was ultimately the clash of two divergent ideologies: the first, and most obvious, was the slaveowner’s financial considerations for sustaining their slaves, while the second and less apparent were the ideological connections slaves maintained to African traditions and folklore.¹⁸⁶

Savitt found that slaves often resisted white healthcare in different ways, whether through covert passive-aggressive means or more outright refusals. For example, slaves sought out the opinions of their friends or close family members, and if that did not solve the ailment, “they depended on Negro herb and root doctors or on influential conjurers among the local black population.”¹⁸⁷ Savitt also recognized the temporal constraints of medical care at a time when transportation and communication in the rural South were at the best of time inefficient. Doctors

¹⁸³ Medical expenses to Edward Leigh, 1855-1856, Leigh and Winslow Family Papers, (#4028.5).

¹⁸⁴ Gretchen Long, *Doctoring Freedom: The Politics of African American Medical Care in Slavery and Emancipation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 21.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 21-22, 28.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁸⁷ Todd L. Savitt, “Black Health on the Plantation: Masters, Slaves, and Physicians” in *Science and Medicine in the Old South*, edited by Ronald L. Numbers and Todd L. Savitt (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 347.

at this time might not be able to reach a patient for many hours or days, resulting in slavers panicking and temporarily treating their slaves. For this reason, a plantation relied on self-sufficiency first and foremost whereby older female slaves served as midwives and wet-nurses in addition to overseers and owners keeping records on the latest at-home recipes for treating slaves.¹⁸⁸ This phenomenon is interesting given that plantation owners and overseers granted some slaves a sliver of autonomy until a white physician arrived, at which time the slave's services became disregarded.¹⁸⁹

Moses Grandy's fellow slaves found ways to assist in the healing process of the whipped and punished. One of his hiring masters inflicted severe floggings for failing to do work. Afterwards, the resulting open sores were a breeding ground for fly larvae. Grandy and other slaves came to the aid of the afflicted by understanding their environment and learning healing properties of common plants:

We get a strong weed growing in those parts, called the Oak of Jerusalem; we boil it at night, and wash the sore with the liquor, which is extremely bitter. On this the creepers or maggots come out. To relieve them in some degree after severe flogging, their fellow slaves rub their backs with part of their little allowance of fat meat.¹⁹⁰

Important details in Grandy's narrative show that slave food rations became malleable, serving as both sustenance and a means to medically treat the afflicted.

Intrinsically connected to the slave health on the plantation was the matter of rationing foodstuffs. Phillips stated that "the rations issued to the negroes be never skimped."¹⁹¹ Stamp, on the other, noted that the typical weekly ration of "a peck of cornmeal and three or four pounds of salt pork or bacon... usually provided a diet of sufficient bulk but improper balance."¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 348-349.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 351, 353.

¹⁹⁰ Grandy, *Narrative*, 19.

¹⁹¹ Phillips, *American Negro*, 265

¹⁹² Stamp, *Peculiar*, 282.

Rosser Howard Taylor, a student of Phillips, justified his mentor's position on the slave diet by considering the ramification of underfed slaves: "Underfeeding would produce discontent, promote theft, and impair the strength and effectiveness of a slave."¹⁹³ This, of course, suggests that slaves were well fed.

More modern takes on the slave diet concern themselves with the overall health of the slave. Savitt makes a connection between slave malnourishment and "the apparent black predisposition to tuberculosis."¹⁹⁴ Other scholars found that the "sustenance" slaves were provided generally contained at least the base level of calories and carbohydrates but ultimately lacked essential vitamins and minerals to live a healthy life.¹⁹⁵ Despite the lack of a proper diet, slaves found opportunities to produce additional food, specifically vegetables, in small personal plots near the slave quarters. Phillips found that a large plantation in Natchez, Mississippi enabled each slave family to have "its garden, fowl house and pigsty."¹⁹⁶

Fogel and Engermann stated simply enough that "the belief that the typical slave was poorly fed is without foundation in fact."¹⁹⁷ The authors argue that the manuscript evidence of pork and corn as the foundational foods of slavery in America undermines the seasonal fruits and vegetables that slaves received from their masters or even produced on their own plots. Corn and pork are foods that could last the duration of the year, unlike beef, chicken, and dairy products that needed to be consumed immediately after production.¹⁹⁸

Additionally, Fogel and Engerman found – utilizing "scant" records from large plantations – that slaves in the cotton belt received more caloric intake than the free population

¹⁹³ Taylor, *Slaveholding in North Carolina*, 89.

¹⁹⁴ Savitt, "Black Health," 335.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 342.

¹⁹⁶ Phillips, *American Negro*, 240.

¹⁹⁷ Fogel and Engerman, *Time*, 109.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 109-111.

of 1879. Using this highly selective and somewhat nonrepresentational dataset, the authors argue that antebellum slaves received better nutritional value than the modern society prescribed.¹⁹⁹ Despite the statistical evidence Fogel and Engerman found, the Albemarle's slaves themselves serve as a real-world experience of antebellum American slavery.

In his slave narrative, Moses Grandy recounted the important efforts by his mother to resist slavery through various means. To avoid separation from her children during slave sells on the plantation, his mother often hid the youngsters in the woods for a significant amount of time, sustaining them with strained water “full of tadpoles and insects” and berries picked from the surrounding bushes, and root vegetables.²⁰⁰

As a hired-out slave, Moses encountered many individuals in the Albemarle, one of which was John Micheau. Initially, his temporary master gave little clothing and food to the slaves under his command. Grandy challenged his owner in order to obtain better sustenance for his brethren:

One day he came into the field, and asked why no more work was done. The older people were afraid of him; so I said that the reason was, we were so hungry we could not work. He went home and told the mistress to give us plenty to eat, and at dinnertime we had plenty. We came out shouting for joy, and went to work with delight.²⁰¹

Grandy's own words accompany Stamp's rates of rationing. For the hired-out slaves that built the canals connecting Norfolk and Elizabeth City, Grandy thought that “the food [was] more abundant than that of field slaves: indeed, it is the best allowance in America.”²⁰² And yet, even though Grandy claimed that slaves received the same food allotments that Stamp cited, the slave community had to contend with poor quality foods. Especially vulnerable to easy spoilage

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 111-115.

²⁰⁰ Grandy, *Narrative*, 1.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 18.

before widespread refrigeration, meats were often times, as Grandy stated, “damaged, and bought, as cheap as possible, at auctions.”²⁰³

Later in life, Grandy’s mother was left in a truly vulnerable state. She lived in a small hut in woods near the plantation where other “worn-out slaves, whether men or women, are commonly so treated.”²⁰⁴ There was little farmable land around the hut for the elderly to sustain a small crop of corn, therefore, the other slaves “take it by turns to go at night with a supply saved out of their own scanty allowance of food, as well as to cut wood and fetch water for them.”²⁰⁵ Her state was not unique. Unfortunately, Grandy – who encountered many different slave communities – explained that his mother, who was old and blind, received the standard treatment as she aged. Only a “few good masters” refused to submit their elderly property to such pitiful positions.²⁰⁶ The narrative of Harriet Jacobs adds another level of emphasis to understand slave maintenance.

Jacobs received little food in the early years from her master Dr. James Norcom. While running errands in the town, she sometimes stopped by her grandmother’s “where there was always something to spare for [her].” The times Norcom found out Harriet did not return straight away, she was punished. Every time afterward, Jacob’s grandmother met her at the gate with a meal ready and packed.²⁰⁷ Additionally, Norcom’s wife, Mary, was highly restrictive of the slave’s Sunday meal: “the slaves could get nothing to eat except what she chose to give them.”²⁰⁸ To that end, slave narratives provide chilling testimonies on the varying treatments slaves received in antebellum America.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 27-28.

²⁰⁷ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 10-11.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

In his own words, Grandy experienced both “a good home, and sometimes a bad one.”²⁰⁹ As Moses aged, his master, James Grandy, hired him out to numerous slaveowners in and around the Albemarle. To Moses, a master who treated his chattel “well” was a master who not only fed his slaves enough, but also provided them with “sufficient clothing.” Moses experienced a wide range of clothing allowance from his hired-out masters, from Mr. Kemp who did not skimp on supplies to his slaves, to Enoch Sawyer who did. Sawyer tasked Grandy with ferry duties in Camden County, but – as he remembered – the slaves “had not near enough of either victuals or clothes.”²¹⁰ In order to find some warmth for his shoeless feet in frosts, Grandy “used to rouse an ox or hog, and stand on the place where it had lain.”²¹¹ Sawyer enslaved Grandy for three years, a substantial amount of time for a hired-out slave. As Cecelski stated, Grandy’s position as a slave in the Albemarle was especially unique, for “few maritime trades eluded his hand.”²¹²

Harriet Jacob’s narrative reveals the true reality of the lack of clothing slaves received from their owner. Harriet’s grandmother, Mary Horniblow, served as a remarkable rolemodel for young Harriet. Mary made quite the name for herself as a baker and even received permission to bake in the evenings in order to turn her famous crackers for a profit. With that money, “she would clothe herself and her children,” an additional expense her master did not feel was justified.²¹³ But not only did Mary materially provide for herself and her children, she also obtained some semblance of autonomy and individuality via her success as a skilled urban slave. As a result, Harriet Jacobs developed similar skills that became readily acknowledged and “rewarded.” Earlier in life, James Norcom – who was a minor at that time – urged his father to

²⁰⁹ Grandy, *Narrative*, 3.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² Cecelski, *Watermen’s*, 27.

²¹³ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 6.

consider Harriet's position at the estate "to take charge of his affairs, and make clothes for the slaves."²¹⁴ While certainly isolated cases within a region, the lives of Moses Grandy and Harriet Jacobs serve as testaments to the resourcefulness the American slave exhibited in direct response to their plight.

Additionally, Phillips found in his research that the South Carolina legislature passed specific measures to ensure slaves had proper food *and* clothing. Lawmakers debated many issues related to the peculiar institution, however, the sustenance of the slave took top priority.²¹⁵ Once again, the legacy of Phillips' investigation into American slavery extended to future generations of scholars. Rosser Howard Taylor considered clothing to be "another heavy item" that masters – especially those owning large plantations – acknowledged and documented.²¹⁶ The main difference between slaves' supplies of clothing stemmed around the seasons: less and thinner cotton-based garments in summer, and thick, coarse woolen outerwear which owners supplied in the weeks and months before the fall and winter seasons set in. If possible, the preferred and economic alternative was for an owner to produce – or charge his slaves to produce – garments, hats, and shoes on the estates.²¹⁷

Stampp drew distinctions between slave classes and their corresponding occupations. Specifically, he stated that "the men in fine linens and bright waistcoats, the women in full petticoats and silk gowns, were usually the domestic servants of wealthy planters or townspeople."²¹⁸ Dressing their slaves in lavish clothes enabled slaveowners to maintain a visual representation of their social and economic status. Furthermore, some slaves received motivation

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 88.

²¹⁵ Phillips, *American Negro*, 492-293.

²¹⁶ Taylor, *Slaveholding*, 91.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 91-92.

²¹⁸ Stampp, *Peculiar Insitution*, 289.

and encouragement based on their physical appearance from their master. Additionally, many antebellum residents thought “good clothing was conducive to good health; generous disbursements for an adequate supply was money well spent.”²¹⁹ Fogel and Engerman agreed with Stampf’s argument of finely dressed slaves: “The leather in slave shoes was of a high grade, but little attention was devoted to matters of fashion. Finer clothes were supplied to house servants and other favored slaves.”²²⁰ Slaves tended to rely on external means of economic production to purchase articles that reflected their individuality.

Specific examples of slave clothing in the Albemarle are difficult to discern because many accounts and receipts for slave clothing fall under similar terminology and format with that of white clothing. However, Thomas Newby’s accounts reveal the articles provided to one “boy George.” Newby purchased a three-dollar hat for George in late 1859 from Daughtry Cox and Co., and then a coat in early February 1861.²²¹ The following example shows Captain Timothy Hunter’s significant expenses to provide his male slaves with shoes for the upcoming winter season. The price differences – \$2.50, \$2.75, and \$3.00 – probably resulted from material differences between types of leather.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 290.

²²⁰ Fogel and Engerman, *Time*, 117.

²²¹ Receipts, February 1861 to January 1863 and December 1859 to January 1862; Thomas Newby Papers (#295), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

W. Hunter Esq.
 Bought of S. Cartwright

Date	Item	Price
1857 Oct. 31.	1 pair Miles	3.00
"	Do. Jerry	3.00
"	Do. Cephal	3.00
"	Do. Alfred	3.00
"	Do. Lewis	3.00
"	Do. Solomon	2.75
"	Do. Alfred Rhodes	2.75
"	Do. Charles	2.75
"	Do. Emanuel	2.50
"	Do. Seth	2.50
"	Do. Stephen	2.50
"	Do. George	2.50
"	Do. Jim	2.50
"	Do. Jim Weston	2.50
14		43.25

IMAGE 2.1: Bill of sale for boots for Captain Hunter’s slaves, October 30, 1857; Timothy Hunter Papers (#748.2); East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

Cartwright attached the following memo to Hunter’s bill:

I done the best I could in [fitting] your men out of those 2.50 boots. Those 2.75 boots are worth 3.00, but I put them at 2.75... and equalize them in price as much as possible. Those 3.00 are worth 3.25 a part of them, but I put them at 3.00. I hope they will give satisfaction, if not, it shall be given.

Born to a wealthy slaveowner who held two residences – in the Albemarle and the other in Norfolk – Nelson Ferebee saw firsthand the paternalistic ideologies he and his family followed. Unbeknownst to him, Ferebee learned from his father that slaves needed to be looked after, in more ways than one. Ferebee noted in his memoir that the slave-master dynamic was an interactive cooperation: “the Master gave food, clothes, nursing when sick and took care of them in old age, but he gave little or no attention to their comfort. Their houses were poor, unclean and with very little furniture.”²²²

Ferebee exalted the virtuous behavior of his father’s slaves, many of whom escaped from Union camps to return to the plantation. At the same time, he held to a principle of white supremacy that undermined his statements of care and concern to the slave. For example,

²²² Memoir, page 3, Nelson M. Ferebee Papers (#404.1.a).

Ferebee considered the illegal nature of slave education in terms “to raise the moral standard among them.” He also ascribed to visions of slaves as people without good virtues: “It is doubtful, however, if honestly, truthfulness and chastity are virtues likely to exist to any very great extent among a slave race.”²²³ This setting, this mentality, and this superiority serves as an historian’s guide to interpret manuscript evidence that suggests slaveowners “cared” for their property. Instead, it was truly an economic motivation, and if not solely based on potential income, it was thus produced by racist sentiments and inferiority toward the African.

²²³ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER THREE – “SLAVES AS PROPERTY: SLAVE HIRING AND LIFE INSURANCE”

The first generation of professional historians acknowledged the popular practice of hiring slaves in antebellum America. U. B. Phillips argued that slave hiring picked up interest in order to avoid periods of price speculation, thereby retaining slaves temporarily.²²⁴ Additionally, Phillips found that a large proportion of slaves at estates with over one hundred slaves were regularly hired-out to work neighboring properties.²²⁵ Phillips also characterized slave hiring as a strictly urban practice: “the device of hiring slaves to themselves, which had an invigorated effect here and there in the towns, could find little application in the country.”²²⁶

Also, Phillips drew direct connections between skilled labor and slave hiring in America. Skilled slaves that became temporary property in ship-yards and wharves typically occupied positions like that of white laborers. Typically, merchants and other urban occupations did not necessarily “need” the work of domestic slaves, therefore, these slaves became hired-out property to nearby residents to do such basic work as washing. Totally neglecting the personhood of slaves, Phillips devoted more attention to the hiring master; slave hiring “brought periodic embarrassments to those who depended upon them.”²²⁷ To that end, Phillips emphasized the various roles of slave hiring actors.

Middlemen operated positions as brokers and helped establish lines of communication between master and master in order to discuss the conditions under which a slave became hired. Overall, Phillips’ arguments on slave hiring are unsurprising. For him, “the plantation system cherished slavery as a well-nigh fundamental condition, town industry could tolerate it only by

²²⁴ Phillips, *American Negro*, 204.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 229.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 339.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 407.

modifying its features to make labor more flexibly responsive to the sharply distinctive urban needs.”²²⁸ In short, he argued that plantations were amalgamous and hired-out slaves could expect stability on the farm, and upheaval in the city.

Howard Rosser Taylor, Phillips’ student, found that slave hiring in North Carolina began with the very introduction of the institution. However, large-scale industrialization and improved machinery increased the demand of highly-skilled, temporary slave ownership in various pockets of North Carolina. Taylor found that these transactions occurred at public auction, private offices, and also the sitting rooms of antebellum America. Once again, the supply and demand dynamic of skilled artisans justified slave hiring. Taylor researched other ideologies, no matter how tenuous they exist today. Taylor stated that masters hired their slaves by the month or year for a few reasons: “(1) for the benefit of orphans; (2) during the settlement of an estate; (3) when young, for their support; (4) when one’s slaves became too numerous.”²²⁹ In short, slave hiring was often – according to Progressive Era historians of the South – a means that afforded slaves an opportunity for stability. This ideology directly reflected the historical profession, only one generation removed from the American Civil War.

Stampp had a different perspective on slave hiring. He considered the slave hiring phenomenon as a power dynamic of the antebellum planter class. While only at the initial steps, “thousands of nonslaveholders managed temporarily to obtain the service of slaves and to enjoy the prestige of tenuous membership in the master class.”²³⁰ He also found that during the 1850s slaves from Virginia were hired-out over fifteen-thousand times. Moreover, interested “renters” utilized one or more parties: the private slave-hiring circuit, auctions, or agents. The hiring

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 414.

²²⁹ Taylor, *Slaveholding.*, 75-76.

²³⁰ Stampp, *Peculiar*, 67.

master typically had to adhere to several stipulations. The most common was the typical wording of a hired slave receiving property, food, and clothing while under their ownership. Slaveowners signed off on these agreements across the south, including the Albemarle.

Stark Armistead served as the administrator of David Goodman's estate at the end of 1826. Armistead clearly stated the conditions under which "the Negroes" were kept. Specifically:

- 1st. The Negro Men and Boys, are to be clothes by the Hirer, as follows, viz. Two Shirts and two pair of Trowsers of Northern Tow cloth for Summer; One Shirt, One Woolen Jacket, One pair woolen trowsers and One pair double Soaled Shoes for Winter; And the Women are to be clothed in like quantity and quality, with a pair of Single Soaled Shoes.
- 2nd. The Negroes in sickness are to be furnished by the Hirer with whatever a Physician shall order or direct, except Medicines and Medical advice.
- 3rd. The Negroes are not to be sent by, or worked upon Water except at the risk of the Hirer.
- 4th. The Negroes are to be returned to Stark Armistead in Plymouth on the 24th December 18__.²³¹

Under these circumstances, Gremage became hired-out to Thomas B. Haughton and Thomas Sanderson for a total value of \$154.67 from January 1827 until December 1828.²³²

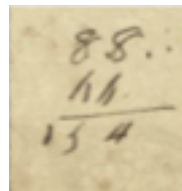


IMAGE 3.1: Calculations on reverse of Gremage's hiring receipt, Brownrigg Family Papers (#597), Slave Hire Receipt, December 27, 1826.

Slaves sometimes became exclusive hired-out labor. On January 2, 1830, William B. Wynns served as agent to Benjamin Wynns and sent five slaves from Wynns Ferry as hires. Their conditions were familiar to Armistead's. Each slave, no matter the sex or age, was to receive "good clothing... hat and blanket" along with absolutely no employment "in fishing or on the water."²³³ Each of these slaves were hired again to the same masters except in one case

²³¹ Brownrigg Family Papers (#597), Slave Hire Receipt, December 27, 1826.

²³² *Ibid.*, and Slave Hire Receipt, December 27, 1827.

²³³ Slave Hire List, January 2, 1830; Murfreesboro Historical Association Collection Wynns Family Papers (#691-002.11.b).

five years later. Interestingly enough, the only hiring rates that changed were George's – which was minimal – and Milly, who became hired out for \$10 less, even though Wynns included her child in this transaction.²³⁴

As Stampp noted, slave hires also became the temporary property of prominent railroad companies.²³⁵ While this necessarily was not the case for the Albemarle, the prominent cities in the region paid monthly for the hire of slaves. On August 31, 1839, the town commissioners of Elizabeth City paid \$35 to John Morris and “negro man Daniel” for one month's work in the Great Dismal Swamp with the city.²³⁶ Work in the Dismal Swamp relied heavily upon enslaved labor. On February 5, 1851, Nathaniel Gaines (or Garner) hired the help of Jack Miller to Pasquotank County to labor in the Dismal Swamp. Jack's receipt included physical descriptions, unique given the document's format and that, typically, slaveowners did not acknowledge the physical characteristics of their slaves.

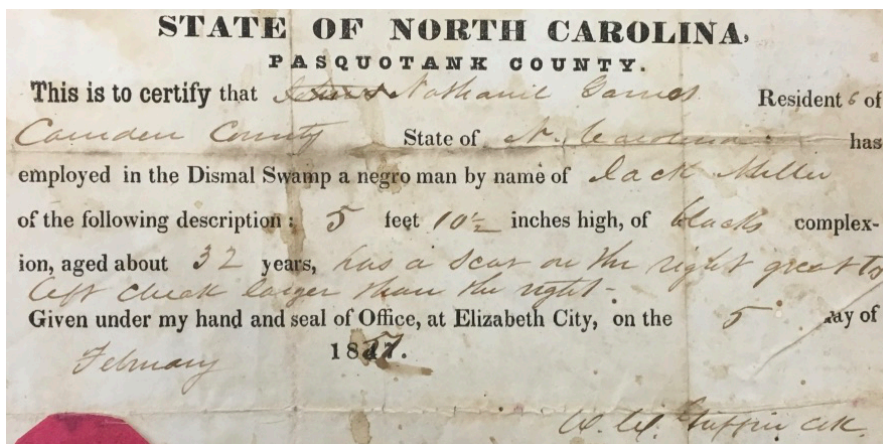


IMAGE 3.2: Slave Hire Receipt, February 5, 1851, Pasquotank County Records of Slaves and Free Persons of Color (075.928.10)

²³⁴ Slave Hire List, January 3, 1835; Murfreesboro Historical Association Collection Wynns Family Papers (#691-002.11.b).

²³⁵ Stampp, *Peculiar*, 71-72.

²³⁶ Slave Hire Receipt, August 31, 1839, Pasquotank County Records of Slaves and Free Persons of Color (075.928.10).

Such work necessitated that slaveowners take extra precautions to protect their investments. Owners in the Albemarle preferred their hired slaves work in the field as “flat-hands,” the term Henry H. Small used in the hiring receipt of “negro boy Simon.” Additionally, Small ordered that Simon be “treated in a humane manner.”²³⁷ Simon cost \$225 as a hired slave, a substantial amount given that the Upper South had lower overall hiring prices. Hardy Hardison rented Fred and Hank during the 1857 season for \$320 to three hiring masters. While the hirers had to furnish proper clothing and foods, they also needed to ensure the following conditions:

not to work said slaves at a fishery or out of the counties of Washington and Tyrrell on any terms whatsoever, or employ said slaves at any steam mill or by water unless at our own risk. We also not to work said slaves in a canal or wet ditch between the 1st October and 1st of April.²³⁸

Tom’s 1851 hiring receipt had similar terms. For eleven months, Samuel Rodgers rented out Tom to “not be employed... to work to go on water only at our risk nor to work at any steam mill.”²³⁹ This example exhibited the falsehoods that slave hiring created in antebellum America. Slave hiring in the Albemarle reveals that slavers expressed interest in their slaves’ welfare strictly in business aspects. The maritime context of the Albemarle saw slaveowners hesitate to employ their slaves in these conditions. Surely, the inland plantation offered health and physical concerns upon the hired slave as well.

Despite the lower overhead of hired slaves, Albemarle residents continually found it difficult to settle these debts over the years. Samuel Rodgers valued Tom at \$55 for eleven months, a relatively low price. However, Tom’s hiring masters – Josiah B. Davenport, S. S.

²³⁷ Slave Hire Receipt, January 4, 1854, Chowan County Miscellaneous Slave Records (024.928.33).

²³⁸ Slave Hire Receipt, December 27, 1856, Tyrrell County Records of Slaves and Free Persons of Color (096.928.2).

²³⁹ Slave Hire Receipt, January 28, 1851, Tyrrell County Records of Slaves and Free Persons of Color (096.928.2).

Simmons, and J. A. Swain – paid little of their debt to the following year. Even then, their \$4.05 payment was almost a week late.²⁴⁰

Charging interest was an easy method for an owner to recoup his losses after hiring owners failed to pay the remaining balance. A wealthy slave-owning woman, Ann C. Blount for example, charged addition forty-three cents after two hirers did not settle their debt in time.²⁴¹

Henry H. Small’s slave Simon became the hired-out property to four separate owners. The receipt explicitly stated that any one of the four had the ability to pay Small; however, it appears none of them did. As a result, Small charged interest of \$10.68.²⁴²

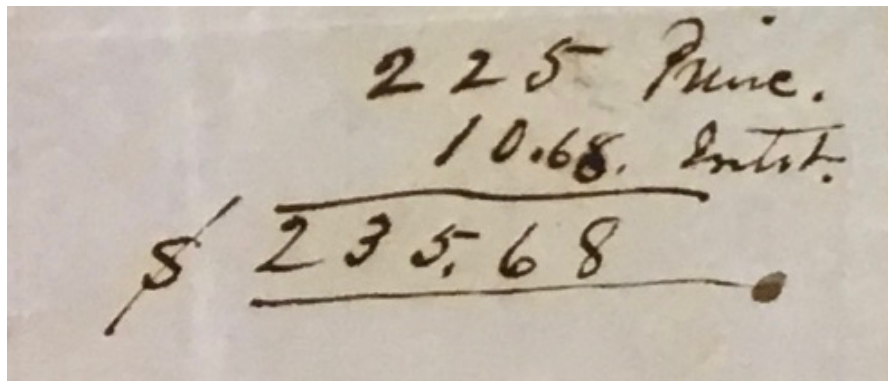


IMAGE 3.3: Calculations on reverse of Simon’s hiring receipt, Slave Hire Receipt, January 4, 1854, Chowan County Miscellaneous Slave Records (024.928.33).

The American Civil War changed the slave hiring market in the Albemarle in profound ways. Joseph E. Evans rented “woman Rose” from William Hancock initially for \$25 in 1861. The war and economic struggle thereafter probably had a dramatic impact upon this agreement. This bill finally received payment ten years later, on February 15, 1871, for the inflated price of \$40.18.²⁴³ Additionally, William E. Mann wrote to Thomas Newby in April 1862 “on account of

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ Slave Hire Receipt, 1852, Chowan County Miscellaneous Slave Records (024.928.33). Ann C. Blount, according to census records, had a large slave population as early as 1830, when she owned 40 slaves; 1830 United States Federal Census, Chowan, North Carolina.

²⁴² Slave Hire Receipt, January 4, 1854, Chowan County Miscellaneous Slave Records (024.928.33).

²⁴³ Slave Hire Receipt, June 1, 1861, Chowan County Miscellaneous Slave Records (024.928.33).

the tightness of the times.’’²⁴⁴ This implied that the Civil War had restricted economic fortunes for the Albemarle’s residents. As a result, Mann agreed to rent out a young carpenter by the name of Ben for seventy-five cents per day. Over a year later, Newby paid Mann \$13.75 for Ben’s work, which came out to nearly three weeks of carpentry work.²⁴⁵

Intimately connected to slave hiring were the master’s efforts to insure the very life of his slaves. While this occurred throughout the south, Captain Timothy Hunter’s slaves serve as one of the few in the Albemarle. From May 1849 until the first weeks of 1856, Captain Hunter insured twenty of his slaves for various amounts through the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company. Despite the wide-ranging annual premiums and insured values, Capt. Hunter acknowledged the gender and age difference between his slaves. Much like purchase prices, Hunter’s female slaves received insurance values less than their male counterparts. However, the disparity between the two sexes was less extreme, at least in this examination. On average, Hunter insured his female slaves at only \$70 less than his males. Other factors also played a role in the divergent annual premiums and overall values.

Six of Hunter’s insured slaves²⁴⁶ received insured values less than their bargained purchase prices. This appears, most likely, to stem from the significant amount of time that transpired from their purchase and Hunter’s insurance documentation. For example, Capt. Hunter purchase Jim Keaton in 1842 for \$575. However, eleven years later, Hunter valued Jim Keaton at about half of that value.²⁴⁷ Possibly, Jim Keaton aged past his initial valuation and became less valuable as an older man. Still, Hunter thought it necessary to purchase life insurance policies on

²⁴⁴ William E. Mann to Thomas Newby, April 4, 1862, Thomas Newby Papers (#295).

²⁴⁵ Slave Hire Receipt, May 8, 1863, Thomas Newby Papers (#295).

²⁴⁶ Jim Keaton, Daniel, Jim, Jerry, Solomon, and Caleb.

²⁴⁷ Jim Keaton’s insured value was \$300, while his annual premium was \$9.06, the fourth lowest among Hunter’s slaves.

Keaton and others, who likely spent time on or near the water working for Hunter, a shipbuilder.²⁴⁸ Three others joined Jim Keaton at that time and received decreases in insured values (see Appendix 3.1).

Hunter's motivations remain unclear, for it appears – especially in the cases of Solomon and Caleb – that some slaves received lower insurance values even though they were purchased just a few days prior. According to Savitt, it was customary for an insurance firm to insure a slave for only a portion of his or her “value,” typically at a mark of two-thirds to three-fourths.²⁴⁹ But for Hunter, he could simply lose his investment even after making a claim. However, Captain Hunter's actions to insure his chattel lends some insight into his slaves' job duties. Around the first of the year, Hunter insured his slaves for the impending shipping season. Therefore, these slaves were probably heavily involved in the Albemarle's maritime trade, whether as ship builders or even porters.

Scholars continue to examine slave life insurance policies in antebellum America. The work of Savitt and Berry, four decades apart, serve to enlighten readers to how slaves obtained valuation through speculative and institutional price rates. Savitt found a direct relationship between dangerous slave occupations and the purchased life insurance policies. The difficulty in researching slave insurance stems from the high turnover of insurance firms in the South during the 1840s and 1860s, says Savitt. The idea of property insurance actually held roots to maritime insurance claims that protected against pirates and losses at sea. Northern firms took up the idea of property insurance with fervor, and the southern states only grasped onto the notion of these firms from 1840 to 1860, when at least sixteen insurance companies opened their doors.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ 1860 United States Federal Census, Elizabeth City, Pasquotank, North Carolina.

²⁴⁹ Todd L. Savitt, “Slave Life Insurance in Virginia and North Carolina,” *The Journal of Southern History* 43, no. 4 (Nov. 1977): 587.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 583-584.

Additionally, studying slaves in these financial contexts is crucial because it represents antebellum paradoxical thinking at its finest. Put another way, slaveowners were familiar with the concept of insuring property (buildings, land property, etc.), but they became uncertain where the slave fit in with this scenario. Specifically, if a slaveowner owned substantial plantations and chattel, “the bondsman was still treated ambiguously as both person and property.”²⁵¹ Thus, to say a slave had a life to insure implied personhood upon a piece of property which, in certain contexts, was no different than cattle.

Savitt’s work on the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company of Raleigh shows a steady increase of “money on hand” that the firm had through its first decade of operation. From 1850 to 1860, North Carolina Mutual increased its overall economic prospects from \$23,565 to \$191,516, with only one year being a decline, that from 1854/55. During this same period, the firm continually paid more to slavers for their loss of property than they did to their white-only policy holders. In the 1850s, North Carolina Mutual paid whites fifty-eight times for losses of their loved ones, while they made nearly two-hundred payments to slaveowners for the loss of their slaves. Additionally, whites received substantially more money for the loss of their family than they did for their slaves. For example, in the 1857 fiscal year, North Carolina Mutual paid on average \$3,535 for each white loss, while they paid on average \$665 for the loss of a slave. The overall substance of North Carolina Mutual rested from the vast amount of slave policies the firm opened, rather than from the white policies. In that same year, the firm had less than one-fourth white policies. Thus, the annual premiums of slave policies sustained the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company.²⁵²

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 586.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 594.

Berry took a more comparative approach to understand slave insurance with a specific case study: the Cane Brake Plantation in Mississippi. Berry found that children also became the subject to life insurance policies that disregarded gendered norms. Slave children did not receive insurance values that reflected their gender, just like their valuations.²⁵³ This is most likely from the lack of their reproductive value. Additionally, Berry uses this demographic to serve as a jumping off point for her analysis that not only did enslavers insure their property in “times of prosperity, but [also] during periods of major economic risks, such as war.”²⁵⁴

Furthermore, Berry found that, once male and female slaves underwent puberty, owners began to recognize the slave for what he or she was: a piece of economic property. The life insurance policies of slave at this age bracket also reflect the high profit/high risk of slaves in adolescence and young adulthood.²⁵⁵ With this backdrop, understanding slave life insurance policies reveal the true economic influence that the slave had on antebellum America. Because of the relative late acceptance of slave insurance, insurance agents in the south gained temporary wealth thanks to the manipulative values ascribed to slaves.

All in all, slave hiring was a topic that historians – according to Darlene Perry – did not properly emphasize. Specifically, her analysis of the counties of North Carolina east of Raleigh found that slave hiring “strengthened and threatened the institution of slavery in eastern North Carolina throughout the colonial and antebellum periods.”²⁵⁶ The inclusion of slave hiring in antebellum North Carolina took labor pressures off farmers and family-run businesses, allowing for increased production. While the typical interaction of slave owner and hirer showed two

²⁵³ Berry, *Price*, 46-47.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 55.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

²⁵⁶ Darlene M. Perry, “A Profitable, but Risky Business: Slave Hiring in Colonial and Antebellum Eastern North Carolina” (master’s thesis, ECU, 2004), i.

clashing business agendas, the slave hiring system of the Albemarle exhibited nuances with regard to the institution's conflict with the *de jure* norms of American slavery. Just like slave purchasing, dichotomous evaluation of slave hiring receipts does an injustice to the topic. Variables such as gender, age, skill, date, and price of commodities often were not set in stone, but rather formed a slippery slope of price speculation that varied from case to case in the Albemarle.

CHAPTER FOUR – “CATCH THE SCOUNDREL!’ ESCAPED SLAVES IN THE ALBEMARLE”

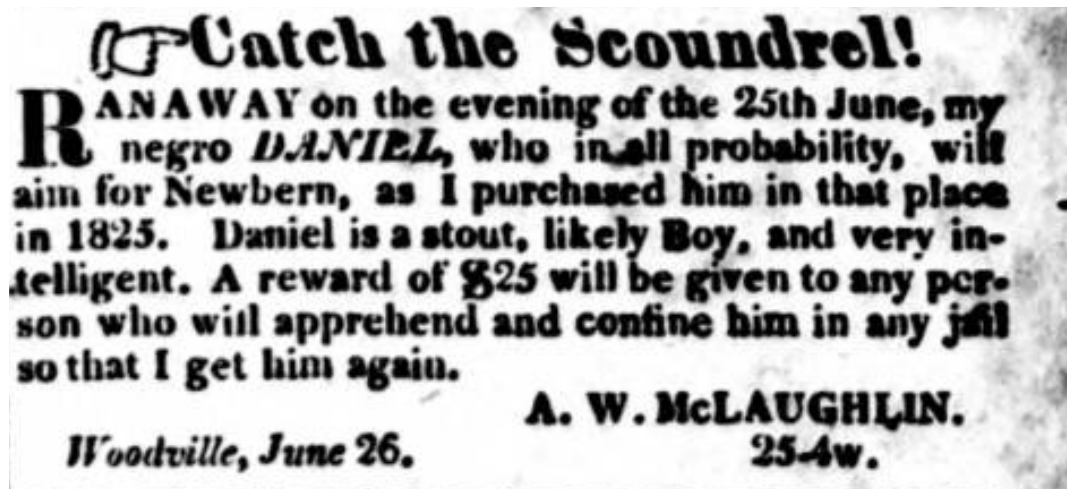


IMAGE 4.1: Slave runaway advertisement for Daniel, slave of Woodville, North Carolina resident A. W. McLaughlin. "Catch the Scoundrel!," *Carolina Observer* (Fayetteville), June 28, 1827)

Scholarly work on slave runaways in North Carolina continues to be an important area of colonial and antebellum slave history. Professional historians continue to publish articles, monographs, and edited collections on the subject. Additionally, works of historical fiction influence the public's impressions of slave punishment and their flight from bondage. These different formats allow for a broader synthesis of slave life and valuation than solely examining manuscript materials.

Freddie L. Parker's *Running for Freedom: Slave Runaways in North Carolina, 1775-1840*, published in 1993, is an important analytic work on the demographic make-up of slaves that escaped their North Carolina masters. At time of publication, there was limited use of "quantifiable data on fugitive slaves in North Carolina, between 1775 to 1840."²⁵⁷ Parker entered this historiographical void with his examination of the distribution and frequency of slave age and sex, complexion, and time of the year that the slave escaped.

²⁵⁷ Freddie L. Parker, *Running for Freedom: Slave Runaways in North Carolina, 1775-1840* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), xiii.

Parker's study also included a unique discussion of slave personalities and family life. While the ads gave a visible picture of the escaped, slaveowners went beyond the physical to describe their chattel. Some slaveowners pointed out their property via particular skills or habits, their ability to speak and overall "countenance."²⁵⁸ In addition, Parker highlighted the possible destinations that slaves sought, as well as their rewards.

The following year Parker published an edited volume of slave runaway ads in North Carolina: *Stealing a Little Freedom: Advertisements for Slave Runaways in North Carolina, 1791-1840*. This volume enabled scholars to utilize county, city, and subject indexes to locate particular escaped slave advertisements. In total, *Stealing a Little Freedom* "contain[s] 2,145 advertisements for more than 2,600 fugitive slaves."²⁵⁹

In the spirit of Parker's work, Bradley R. Foley edited *North Carolina Slaves, 1826-1865: Articles and Advertisements in the Greensborough Patriot Newspaper*, and compiled "a comprehensive transcribed collection of advertisements and articles"²⁶⁰ that related to slavery in that North Carolina city. While this volume is not directly related to slavery in the Albemarle region of North Carolina, Foley stressed the importance of slave articles and advertisements for research on North Carolina's slave system.

In addition to filling the void created by the lack of slave narratives in the region, his use of newspapers and other periodicals shed light on the slaveowners' perspective: "Useful data such as the names of slaves, detailed physical descriptions, and names of immediate family members; skills the slaves' possessed as well as the names of previous owners are often

²⁵⁸ See Parker, *Running for Freedom*, 123-172.

²⁵⁹ *Stealing a Little Freedom: Advertisements for Slave Runaways in North Carolina, 1791-1840*, edited by Freddie L. Parker, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1994), xvii.

²⁶⁰ *North Carolina Slaves, 1826-1865: Articles and Advertisements in the Greensboro Patriot Newspaper*, edited by Bradley R. Foley, (Madison, N.C.: Smith River Publishers, 2015), 3.

provided.”²⁶¹ Foley also uses this type of investigation as a call to action for current Americans to document their African-American heritage and ancestry in North Carolina.

This chapter builds on the work of these two scholars with special emphasis paid toward Foley by turning a focused lens on the Albemarle’s runaway slaves. Thanks to collaborative work, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University created an interactive database that contains a digital collection of many slave runaway advertisements. This project features the digitized article next to its transcription, enabling users to use full-text search terms as precise as the slave’s name, age, or craft, along with information about the slaveowner and the anticipated location to which the slave may have fled.²⁶²

Using this online source makes research more accessible, but one of the shortfalls, much like Foley, is that the available digital image is cropped from the newspaper, leaving out the historical context of slaves in North Carolina as commodities. To that end, further research was conducted to analyze these advertisements and newspapers to contextualize the different interests that went hand-in-glove with life in the Albemarle. Beginning with a database of seventy-five runaway slaves with connections to the Albemarle, further investigation increased the sample substantially to an analysis of 110 slaves.

Examining the Albemarle’s runaway slaves sheds light on the demographic make-up of the region’s slave population. While this number pales in comparison to Parker’s,²⁶³ data analysis shows similarities and differences between the Albemarle as a region and North

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

²⁶² “N.C. Runaway Slave Advertisements.” <http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/RAS> (accessed October 4, 2017).

²⁶³ A total of 2,771 slaves for the years 1775-1840, making my findings around 4% of that sample. Parker, *Running for Freedom*, 65.

Carolina as a whole. Keeping in mind that Parker's findings covered a larger geographical area and a longer time period, data for this area is strictly a case study.

The Albemarle's antebellum runaway slaves depart from Parker's findings in various respects, but most notable is the proportion of male to female runaways. Parker cites that, of his larger examination, 2,179 (82%) enslaved males escaped, while just 482 (18 %) were women.²⁶⁴ However, male slaves in the Albemarle still represented the vast majority at 76.4% (eighty-four slaves in total), but the proportion of females who escaped was larger at 23.6% (twenty-six slaves in total).

Parker explains this dynamic by noting that female slaves were central to the vitality of their children on the plantation, and the risks of "uprooting and taking a child or children in flight were onerous, time-consuming, and exhaustive."²⁶⁵ Additionally, if female slaves did escape, they often attracted attention from inquisitive whites in rural or urban areas. Therefore, female slaves felt compelled to travel in pairs or with their husband or a male counterpart.

One such case occurred when Flora and Chloe escaped from John Lanston in 1827. Lanston offered twenty dollars "for each or either of them," in addition to stating that Flora was a "raw-boned ugly negro, and is well known in Edenton to be as a bad as she is ugly," while Chloe, on the other hand, was "black, tall and likely."²⁶⁶ Two years later, John Paine, a farmer who resided north of Edenton, advertised for the return of his slaves Tom and his wife Sophia. The two "took themselves off" on April 12, 1829 and likely fled south to Edenton, where "they [were] both known in the neighborhood."²⁶⁷

²⁶⁴ Parker was able to positively identify the gender of 2,661 runaway slaves, because the other 110 were children and infants who were not described in gendered terms in the runaway ads. *Ibid.*, 69-70.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

²⁶⁶ "Forty Dollars Reward," *Edenton Gazette* (Edenton), July 31, 1827.

²⁶⁷ "\$25 Reward," *Edenton Gazette* (Edenton), May 19, 1829.

Enslavers also utilized racial terminology to describe their escaped property. A slave would not simply be characterized as a “negro,” language typically used in vague bills of sale, but also received descriptions such as black, dark, bright, yellow, light, or different shades of mulatto. Parker found that owners described their runaways nearly 71% of the time in these terms of complexion, and he grouped the runaways in two general groups: those considered as a “Negro” by their owner, or those that likely held biracial heritages, called mulatto during this period.²⁶⁸

By and large, slaves characterized as “black,” “dark,” or “brown” were the most frequent slaves to flee from their masters in North Carolina, a total of 983 slaves, or 52.3% of Parker’s sample. Nearly one in three slave runaways in North Carolina was “black,” while 18.2% were “dark,” and “brown” was only 2.6% of the slave runaways. The second category of slave complexions included almost five hundred categorized as “yellow,” over a quarter of the total runaways in North Carolina. Next, mulattos constituted 15.4% of the sampled runaways, while “light” and “bright” slaves combined to nearly 6%.²⁶⁹ The importance of this data underlines the overwhelming number of slaves who were likely the product of biracial marriages and births, both forced and otherwise.

Antebellum slave owners in the Albemarle region characterized their runaways more often than in the larger context of the entire state: 79% versus the 71% mentioned above. Despite being a smaller sample size, there are similarities between the Albemarle’s runaway population and that of Parker’s examination. “Black” slaves continued to be the largest part of the slave runaways, while those that were “dark” numbered about one in every four runaways. However,

²⁶⁸ Parker, *Running for Freedom*, 79.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 79-81. Parker urges his readers to consider that slave owners probably used terminology like “black” or “dark,” in addition to mulatto and “yellow” or “light” interchangeably.

the mulatto population of the Albemarle's runaways was substantially smaller than in the entire state (see Appendix 4.1).

Used less often than racialized terms²⁷⁰ – but no less important – were runaway slaves' approximated ages. This, in tandem with age descriptors, help disseminate maturity differences between the enslaved and the enslavers. Numerically speaking, fugitive slaves were various ages, from childhood and adolescence to adulthood and the elderly.

The youngest runaway Albemarle slave in the antebellum period was Jim (fifteen years), while Sip was the eldest at fifty years. Jim and his elder brother, Henry, escaped from their owner, Charles Hoskins, on Independence Day, 1829. Hoskins thought the brothers stayed together in their flight and instructed subscribers of the *Edenton Gazette* to keep a wary eye out for the boys' mother, Beck, who was owned in Edenton: "I have an impression, that she may procure a pass for them and send them in the county, either above or below Edenton, as she has many acquaintances and will no doubt dress them quite well."²⁷¹ Interestingly enough, Henry and Jim were possibly half-brothers, given that Henry was "yellow" and Jim "dark."

Sip, the fifty-year old male slave, fled from his master's plantation in Bertie County on June 30, 1819. Joseph S. Pugh, his owner, believed that Sip was escaping in pursuit of his wife. Owned by Mr. James Wiggins, Sip's wife was in route to Alabama for an unknown reason. In addition to trekking further south to stay with his love, Sip was a slave who endured the physical toils of slavery. Pugh described him "with a number of scars on his back & shoulders, caused from having been shot."²⁷² There is no explanation as to how Sip came by these injuries, but his

²⁷⁰ Nearly three in four runaway slaves from this period and region had a numerical age attributed to them by their owners.

²⁷¹ "\$40 Reward," *Edenton Gazette* (Edenton), September 22, 1829.

²⁷² "\$10 Reward for Negro Sip," *Raleigh Register and North Carolina Weekly Advertiser* (Raleigh), July 24, 1818.

owner's action of placing his reward advertisement shows some agency on account of Sip's ambitious escape: Pugh, a Bertie County-native, published his ad for the return of Sip in a Raleigh newspaper, even though Wiggins' end-point was Alabama. It is possible that Raleigh was the next stop for Wiggins and Sip's wife, and if so, Sip would be close behind.

Used more often than a numerical age of their slaves,²⁷³ slaveowners utilized culturally-understood age descriptors to identify their escaped property. Terms such as "boy" and "girl" paired with their older counterparts "man" and "woman" to paint a picture of escaped slaves in the antebellum period. These terms carried both characteristics of maturity and gender during this period. Distinguishing female slave runaways as "girls" or "women" follows along a more or less predictable framework: female slaves aged around twenty years old were "women," while those in adolescence or teenage years were "girls."²⁷⁴

Being described as a girl did not necessary undermine a slave's importance on the plantation or in the house. Harriet, a mixed-race slave girl belonging to John Davis, escaped on June 17, 1827 and possibly went to her mother near Nixonton or Newbegun Creek. Despite being just nineteen, Harriet established a reputation for herself as possessing "an audacious impudent temper, slothful and dirty habits."²⁷⁵ The only agency given Harriet, however, actually comes across as a positive characteristic: "notwithstanding all these qualities, [she is] a great favorite of some people who call themselves gentlemen."²⁷⁶ The product of miscegenation, Harriet unwillingly occupied a position in the Albemarle society to satisfy white men.

Male slaves occupied gendered roles differently than female slaves: instead of a neat

²⁷³ Only five slaves were not described in these age terms out of the total sample, N=110.

²⁷⁴ Perhaps a small sample size has some bearing on this simple phenomenon, given that there were only four "girls" who escaped bondage from northeastern North Carolina during the antebellum period.

²⁷⁵ "Five Dollars Reward," *Elizabeth City Star and North Carolina Eastern Intelligencer* (Elizabeth City), July 7, 1827.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

division such as "girl/woman" occurring around 19 years old, there was greyer area for men. Also, an outlier such as Edmund makes the researcher pause and consider his case separately. Edmund was either 25 or 26 when he stole away from Hamilton W. Cotter in Pasquotank County. Edmund, had "lost a front tooth... [and had] a scar on the outside of one of his feet, believed to be the right."²⁷⁷

A "Negro Boy Joe" was one of the examples of a male slave located in this grey area of gendered and aged description. Though he was 19 or 20 years old, Joe was not considered a "man" by his owner James Coffield. There could be several reasons for this, but Joe's advertisement gives us one insight: Joe was short, being approximately four feet nine inches high.²⁷⁸

Tom, probably 20 years old, was James Mullen's slave, being of normal height and dark complexion. However, Tom did have "very large feet, with toes turning unusually outward."²⁷⁹ Effectively, Tom was not as mature as his male comrades, especially those with no physical ailments. Thus, Mullen considered Tom a "boy" despite being reasonably mature, especially by antebellum white standards. These physical features depart from the findings of female slaves during this time: women were "women" based on their age, while men were "men" when they could give the most efficient and productive work to their owner.

Analysis of reward amounts for runaway slaves underlines a common feature of slave valuation in the region during the antebellum period: generally, a female runaway slave went for a reward \$5 less than male slaves (see Appendix 4.2). That, however, is not to say that female slaves did not fetch significantly high reward prices.

²⁷⁷ *Elizabeth City Star and North Carolina Eastern Intelligencer*, July 1, 1829

²⁷⁸ *Edenton Gazette*, August 21, 1820

²⁷⁹ *The Intelligencer and Nag's Head Advocate*, January 26, 1841

There is evidence to state that female slaves were worth upwards of \$100 as a runaway, just like male slaves. For example, one unique case that survives is the significantly high reward set by John Wood, owner of Eve and Sall. Both women were wives to men (Manuel and “old George,” respectively) owned by Mathew Cluff. Wood thought “Eve was seduced away by Manuel in September 1829” and kept quiet for almost four years near Elizabeth City. Only recently, in 1833, did Sall abscond from her master on July 2, 1833, thanks to “old George.”

The couple met for their typical conjugal visit, but this time “old George” came back from Hertford and arrived in Elizabeth City with Sall. Wood believed this to be part of a larger conspiracy: “His object [George], no doubt, is to place her [Sall] with Eve, to be under the protection of the noted villain Manuel and his brothers, who were transported from this County with a view of sending them to New Orleans.”²⁸⁰ The reward for Eve and Sall was equal, \$100 if taken separately or \$200 if taken together.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, female slaves were worth literally nothing as a runaway. Jane, a partially blind slave who was “rather tall” did not even have a reward amount ascribed to her in her advertisement. Her disability likely held some bearing on this phenomenon, but Jane had some sort of usefulness to her owner, Mr. Messenger: Elizabeth Lloyd hired Jane away “some months since” in September 1831 in Elizabeth City.²⁸¹

Male slaves also ran the gamut of reward valuation, from \$10 for Richard H. Blount’s “likely Negro Fellow named Harry”²⁸² to \$150 for Jacob who fled in 1816.²⁸³ Harry’s case is unique. He attempted to flee from Mr. Blount on May 1, 1820, and also took “a small bay

²⁸⁰ *Elizabeth City Star and North Carolina Eastern Intelligencer*, August 10, 1833.

²⁸¹ *Elizabeth City Star and North Carolina Eastern Intelligencer*, September 29, 1831.

²⁸² “Runaway,” *Edenton Gazette*, May 1, 1820.

²⁸³ “100 Dollars Reward,” *Edenton Gazette*, October 29, 1816.

horse... out of a neighbor's stable."²⁸⁴ Blount thought that Harry fled to Pasquotank County.

Three days before Christmas of 1820, Mr. Blount once again placed an advertisement for Harry in the *Edenton Gazette*. This time, however, also joining Harry as a runaway was Jack.



(IMAGE 4.2: "200 Dollars Reward," *Edenton Gazette* (Edenton), December 25, 1820)

Harry remained on the loose from his escape in May of that year, and his valuation fluctuated based on how long a slave was in flight.²⁸⁵

And yet, there were also cases of slaves fetching high initial rewards. Jacob was probably 31 or 32 at the time of his escape, and "well made, rather inclined to a light complexion."²⁸⁶ The advertiser, Henry Gilliam, stated a price of \$100 for Jacob if someone caught him within North Carolina. However, anticipating an escape to Virginia or South Carolina, Gilliam also listed the price of \$150 "if taken out of this State."²⁸⁷ This was a substantial sum when compared to market prices of the time period. In New Bern, for example, the market price for a gallon of French

²⁸⁴ "Runaway," *Edenton Gazette*, May 1, 1820.

²⁸⁵ Also note that Blount's description of Harry changed slightly between the two advertisements. At first, Harry was 18 years old with a "yellow complexion," and stood about "5 feet 4 or 5 inches high," but when December came around and Harry still had not been caught, he was then a "light complexion" and about 5 feet 6 inches high."

²⁸⁶ *Edenton Gazette*, October 29, 1816.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

brandy in 1816 was \$3.50.²⁸⁸ In short, slaveowners spent an incredible amount of money on their slaves not only when writing a bill of sale, but also feeding them, clothing them, and apprehending them as runaways.

Josiah Skinner described his "woman" Flora in typical antebellum terms: "tall and very slender, and of a yellowish cast." Before owned by Skinner, Flora was enslaved by John Lanston and Dr. Beasley.²⁸⁹ Apparently Flora was captured and enslaved once again. Seven years later, however, Lanston bought Flora again, and she attempted a second escape. This time, Lanston wrote to the *Edenton Gazette* and described Flora as "a slender, raw-boned ugly negro."²⁹⁰

Flora experienced the horrors of American slavery, traveling from master to master, all the while attempting to flee to freedom. Because this was likely at least the second time Flora escaped, Lanston styled Flora as "ugly." Also, of note was Flora's reward amount for both of these escapes. At first, in December 1820, Flora was worth a \$25 reward, but her second advertisement saw her only worth a \$10 reward in April 1827.

Runaway slave rewards also fluctuated greatly according to the slave's age, though an increase in perceived maturity or numerical age saw an increase in reward amounts. On average, slaves in adolescence or young adulthood were worth a \$25 reward, if caught within the county of their escape. Of course, that reward increased if a slaveowner thought his "man" or "woman" had gone to an entirely different state. Then, prices almost doubled. Sample size, however, may lead to misleading data regarding slaves that escaped to other counties within North Carolina (see Appendix 4.3). Nevertheless, if a slave was older than forty, that usually meant reward

²⁸⁸ *The Carolina Federal Republican*, July 13, 1816. Utilizing inflation calculators shows that this amount of money in 1816 would be \$51.26 in the 2017 economy. Jacob's reward valuation in today's money equates to almost \$2,200.

²⁸⁹ *Edenton Gazette*, December 25, 1820.

²⁹⁰ *Edenton Gazette*, May 8, 1827.

amounts started to decrease: on average, a slave at least forty had a reward of \$20.71, while those aged 30 to 39 saw a peak of average reward valuation (see Appendix 4.4).

Additionally, slave complexions served as another determinant of reward valuation. On average, the most valued runaway slaves in complexion terms were, in descending order: light, mulatto, black, dark, black, dark, bright, and yellow (see Appendix 4.5). The overall lack of mulatto population has already been discussed, so it should serve to caution researchers to be aware of the frequency of these findings. Overall, however, enslavers valued mulatto runaway slaves at half a dollar more than others (see Appendix 4.6).

The most reliable sources that historians use to trace the Underground Railroad in North Carolina are sometimes not as useful to describe the slave experience writ large. While the narratives of Harriet Jacobs, William Henry Singleton, and Moses Grandy are useful for their depth and description, many questions remain unanswered. To accompany slave runaway advertisements, it becomes necessary to examine parallel narratives from traditional and non-traditional sources. Particularly useful – in their context – are the “Slave Narratives,” funded by the Federal Writer’s Project from 1936-1938. Using these sources revealed stories of slaves who either succeeded or attempted to escape from the Albemarle in the antebellum period.

Even before the American Civil War, many North Carolinian slaves recognized that shipping routes into and around the Albemarle might secure their freedom. On May 19, 1846, “old man Abram” found himself in the Norfolk City jail after unsuccessfully using counterfeit papers to escape North. James H. Ransome, the jailor of Norfolk, wrote to Mr. William Hinton exactly one month to the day of Abram’s jailing: “Dear sir, will you do me the favour to inform Mr. Jesse Blanchard that his old man Abram [is] confined in this jail as a runaway?... I have

wrote twice to Mr. Blanchard and Rob. J. Sanders and have not received any answer.”²⁹¹ Two days later, Jesse Blanchard travelled to Norfolk and retrieved his property, paying \$11.50 “in full of Jail fees and corporation tax” for Abram’s time in custody.²⁹² Blanchard quickly decided to rid himself of Abram²⁹³ while still in Norfolk. On June 24, J. B. Lee bought Abram for a price of \$71 before settling the charges of the public auction.²⁹⁴

Abram’s story is not only special because it documents a slave’s worth after recapture, but it also illuminates how familiar Abram and his brethren were to the processes of gaining freedom in the Albemarle. Abram stated to the jailor that he was a hired-out slave in great demand, for he “had not seen [Blanchard] for a month before he left.... He had been at work for several persons in Carolina, one Nathan Whitehead and others.”²⁹⁵

Once in Norfolk, Abram approached a captain to secure passage north, but the unnamed captain was hesitant to be an accomplice to this “crime.” The captain instructed Abram to seek counsel with the mayor of Norfolk and obtain the proper paperwork; Abram did so unsuccessfully. The mayor found that Abram’s free papers were counterfeit, whereupon “he permitted him to jail.”²⁹⁶

Abram utilized his ability as hired-out-property to obtain information on the process to gain freedom in the north. He was consciously aware of the risk of attempting to gain passage on a ship in the Albemarle Sound, so he presumably travelled overland to Norfolk to reduce the risk of being caught in a territory he frequented. Along the way, he gained counterfeit papers in an

²⁹¹ James H. Ransome to William Hinton, 19 June 1846, Perquimans County Slave Records, 077.928.2, State Archives of North Carolina.

²⁹² Receipt, 21 June 1846, Perquimans County Slave Records, 077.928.2, State Archives of North Carolina.

²⁹³ The records use the names Abram and Abraham interchangeably, but it is clear they are the same person.

²⁹⁴ Bill of sale, 24 June 1846, Perquimans County Slave Records, 077.928.2, State Archives of North Carolina.

²⁹⁵ James H. Ransome to William Hinton, 19 June 1846, Perquimans County Slave Records, 077.928.2, State Archives of North Carolina.

²⁹⁶ Bill of sale, 24 June 1846, Perquimans County Slave Records, 077.928.2, State Archives of North Carolina.

effort to persuade a captain in Norfolk. Failing to do so, he brazenly met with the mayor of Norfolk in another attempt to slide through the cracks of the maritime Underground Railroad. However, his luck ran out.

During his time as a prisoner in Norfolk, Abram surely thought long and hard about his future. Slaves were keenly aware of the punishments rendered to runaways, but perhaps another form of punishment for Abram was the monetary transaction that went along with being an escaped slave. Once he became the property of J. B. Lee, Abram's narrative disappears in the archive. Not only did Abram seek refuge for himself, but he also desired to "produce the free papers of [a] woman by the name of Dennis" with his anticipated passage north.²⁹⁷ However, Dennis is not further described, leaving many unanswered questions about this woman and her life after Abram's recapture.

On May 10, 1858, court justices James W. Mullen, William Felton, and Samuel Nixon presided over a case in the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions at Hertford, Perquimans County. This particular case allowed tremendous power to Joshua C. Skinner. Testifying in court, John Skinner (Joshua Skinner's witness and likely brother) testified that Joshua did in fact own a "negro Slave Dick" that fled north to freedom. According to the description given in open court, Dick was "5 feet 7 or 8 inches in height about 30 years old very broad Shoulders, very Black – large white eyes, fine teeth, speaks quickly and has a slight Halt in his gait when walking."²⁹⁸ Joshua Skinner stated that Dick ran away "without his consent" in November 1857, and thought Dick was in New York, a "fugitive from service and labour."²⁹⁹ The resulting resolution adopted

²⁹⁷ James H. Ransome to William Hinton, 19 June 1846, Perquimans County Slave Records, 077.928.2, State Archives of North Carolina.

²⁹⁸ William L. Byrd, III, ed. *North Carolina Slaves and Free Persons of Color, Perquimans County* (Westminster, M.D.: Heritage Books, 2006), 365.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

in court allowed Joshua C. Skinner to have the ability to pursue ways to apprehend Dick under the Fugitive Slave Act.

Born in or around 1856, Mary Barbour was the daughter of two enslaved parents. Mr. Jefferson Mitchel of McDowell County owned her mother Edith, while Mr. Jordan in Avery County owned her father. Mary recalled little of her childhood as a slave, and what she did was second-hand information from her parents. After the American Civil War erupted in 1861, Mary and her three younger siblings were all that remained with her parents; their master sold her other twelve siblings “fas’ as dey got three years old.”³⁰⁰ Her escape toward freedom was one of the first events that she could remember.

Mary, her younger brother Henry, and infant twins Liza and Charlie began their escape with their parents along a wooded path. Mary recounted the “sighin’ in de trees, an’ de hoot owls.... [she] wuz half asleep an’ skeered stiff.”³⁰¹ Afterwards, the family came upon a wagon and mules and continued east to seek refuge with the Union soldiers. Mary’s “pappy” had escaped from Mr. Jordan and secured their initial transportation. Travelling at night and hiding in the woods by day, Mary and her family reached Dr. Richard Dillard’s home Beverly Hall in Edenton “after a while.”³⁰² They resided there for a time; thereupon the “Yankees” told Mary’s father to head for New Bern, where the Union soldiers took up slave refugees.

In New Bern, the soldiers confiscated the mules and wagon and placed the family aboard “a long white boat named *Ocean Waves*” that transported them to Roanoke Island. After

³⁰⁰ Page 79, *Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 1, Adams-Hunter*, 1936, retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn111/> (Accessed November 07, 2017).

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, page 80.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, page 81; Belinda Hurmence, ed., *My Folks Don't Want Me To Talk About Slavery* (Winston-Salem, N.C.: John F. Blair, Publisher, 1984), 15. Hurmence’s edited collection helps understand the difficult terminology the writer transcribed.

spending time on the island, Mary and her family boarded *Ocean Waves* and returned to New Bern, where Mary lived out most of her life until she moved to Raleigh with her husband.³⁰³



IMAGE 4.3: Circa 1915 photograph of Beverly Hall, the Dillard family home built in 1810 in Edenton, NC. Richard Dillard Papers (#599.1.n.7), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

While just a young girl, Mary Barbour’s harrowing escape with her family shifts focus of the Underground Railroad in North Carolina and places emphasis on the Albemarle’s people, places, and connections. Mary’s extensive journey from plantation³⁰⁴ to Chowan County and then south to New Bern preceded the maritime route of her time as a refugee. Despite her short time on Roanoke Island, Mary found freedom much differently than typically portrayed, in a port city further south from where she escaped. This demonstrates that these narratives are unique for several reasons. Most importantly, the stories that survive in our archive are few and far between, given the vast number of slaves in northeastern North Carolina, and are not representative of the

³⁰³ Hurmence, ed., *My Folks*, 16.

³⁰⁴ Mary was uncertain of where exactly she was owned at this time, but she “reckon” she was born in McDowell County, over 300 linear miles from Edenton, North Carolina.

population as a whole. Nevertheless, they provide researchers with important insights into the flight to freedom for thousands of slaves.

Archaeological work offers further insight to this area's slave runaways. The Great Dismal Swamp was often a destination for many slaves in North Carolina. However, the slave societies that made up the area remain lucrative, especially considering that this maroon community lived in close proximity to their former owners. Daniel Sayers, anthropologist from American University, began exploring this topic in 2003 after he began the Great Dismal Swamp Landscape Study.³⁰⁵ He found that slave runaways formed maroon communities and “created a self-reliant subsistence society using available materials.”³⁰⁶

Sayers and his team found several interesting features over the last decade that testify to the existence of these communities. For example, they discovered a likely Native American structure dating to the first half of the seventeenth century; a fire pit and at least one cabin at one location; and at another, a cluster of 150 features Sayers believes to represent a complex slave refugee community complete with five cabins. Sayers argues that the overall paucity of materials at these sites is a testament to the “nonmaterialistic nature of the settlements and form a significant pillar of Sayers’ theories about maroon culture.”³⁰⁷

Colson Whitehead’s recent novel *The Underground Railroad* gives readers another interesting insight on slave escapes in antebellum America. Whitehead’s protagonist, Cora, escaped slavery in Georgia by relying on benevolent white men and her own resourcefulness. Moreover, Cora’s time in South Carolina – the next leg of her escape from Georgia – suggests that she enacted some social mobility and autonomy in a free black population.

³⁰⁵ Daniel O. Sayers, CV. <https://www.american.edu/uploads/docs/D.OSayersCVFeb2017.pdf> (Accessed December 18, 2017).

³⁰⁶ Marion Blackburn, “American Refugees,” *Archaeology* 64, no. 5 (2011): 50.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 53-54.

Because of the minimal freedom awarded her, Cora and her confidant, Caesar, repeatedly delayed their next segment of their journey. However, after situations changed and she found herself in North Carolina – this time without Caesar – she learned that going north did not equate to freedom. One of Cora’s first sights in North Carolina was the Freedom Trail, where: “the corpses hung from trees as rotting ornaments.... One had been castrated, an ugly mouth gaping where his manhood had been. The other was a woman. Her belly curved.”³⁰⁸

Later, hiding in an attic, Cora noticed festivities in the town square. After plays in blackface, the citizenry entertained themselves and witnessed the hanging of a caught runaway: “Her gray tunic was torn and smeared with blood and filth, and her head had been crudely shaved.... Cora turned away before the girl sung.... The town hushed. [The executioner] gave the word.”³⁰⁹

While this indeed describes a fictional scene not based on manuscript evidence, Whitehead’s research and writing show someone intimately aware of runaway slaves in antebellum America. Also, Whitehead acknowledges many historians, thinkers, and writers that helped create this work of fiction.³¹⁰ Additionally, Whitehead consulted the same online database mentioned above. Whitehead inserted insightful runaway slave advertisements to serve as chapter breaks, before writing his own fictional advertisement for Cora.³¹¹ This work, while not typically associated with the “archive” of slave historiography in America, will serve future generations by bringing narratives of fugitive slaves to a general audience, while also focusing the day-to-day life of fugitive slaves in the antebellum South.

³⁰⁸ Colson Whitehead, *The Underground Railroad* (New York: Doubleday, 2016), 152.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 159-160.

³¹⁰ In his acknowledgements, Whitehead thanks scholars and former slaves alike. Individuals who assisted, directly or indirectly, with his work included: Franklin D. Roosevelt, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs, Edward E. Baptist, and Eric Foner, among others. *Ibid.*, 309.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 298.

In addition to archaeological work and historical fiction, geographic analysis assists slave researchers by manipulating maps and sketches to conform to modern-day boundaries. For example, some maps are not to scale or face incorrect cardinal directions. Using programs such as ArcGis allows for proper documentation of likely locations of slave plantations in the Albemarle region. The following map helps identify the plantation of James Coffield.



(MAP 4.1: Clipped section of 1830s map laid over modern geographical map around Edenton, North Carolina. James Coffield's plantation is approximately 6 miles north by north-west of Edenton. "[Untitled map showing area from Edenton northeast to the Dismal Swamp Canal] [1830s]" by Walter Gwynn, MC. 136-A, State Archives of North Carolina)

This manipulated map displays the locality of Phebe, an escaped slave who fled from Coffield in 1832.

\$50 REWARD.


A REWARD of Fifty Dollars will be paid by the subscriber, for the apprehension of negro woman **PHEBE**, if taken without the State, or Twenty Five Dollars if taken within the same. Said Phebe was purchased by me in the month of February last, of **W. B. Minton**, and was formerly the property of **Nathaniel Bond, Esq. of Edenton**. She is of dark complexion, small stature, and well known in this neighborhood.

JAS. COFFIELD.
Chowan Co. March 7—ts 6

(IMAGE 4.4: *North-Carolina Miscellany* (Edenton), March 7, 1832)

Additionally, the following map and runaway advertisement documents the flight of “negro girl” Harriet:

Five Dollars Reward.



Runaway from the subscriber on the night of the 17th of June last, negro girl **HARRIET**, belonging to **John^d Davis**.— She is supposed to be lurking in the neighborhood of **Nixonton** or **Newbegun Creek**, where she has a mother living—she is a bright, mulatto, 19 years old, of an audacious impudent temper, slothful and dirty habits—but notwithstanding all these qualities, a great favorite of some people who call themselves gentlemen. The above reward will be given, when secured and delivered to me in **Elizabeth-City**.

T. E. Krozer.
Elizabeth-City, July 7. Bt

(IMAGE 4.5: *Elizabeth City Star and North Carolina Eastern Intelligencer* (Elizabeth City), July 7, 1827)



(MAP 4.2: Clipped section of circa 1858 map showing the possible location of Harriet's escape from Elizabeth City. "Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal connecting Chesapeake Bay with Currituck, Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds and their tributary streams [c. 1858]" by John Lathrop, Cm912.02 1858L, North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

Runaway slaves are a difficult topic to research. Stories are either nonexistent or end in a hazy dead-end created by racism and capitalism. Researchers should be cognizant of the advancements made in other disciplines, not just in the humanities. Utilizing a digital history database to collect and analyze statistical data led to the following conclusions: slave complexions were used as physical descriptors, yet researchers can utilize their precise terminologies to understand miscegenation in America; and female women were purposefully described in terms of maturity, while male characteristics revolved around physical prowess. Archaeological work and literature form an unlikely duo. Slaves recognized that their situation was dire, and they often established maroon communities. Additional work should be done in other areas, other states, in other timeframes to see if these hypotheses ring true.

Additionally, examination of runaway slaves serves as the final step to understand slave valuation in an economy that constantly placed and modified prices upon human chattel. This process was cyclical and seemingly without end. For example, Blanchard's Abram fell in the sphere of lost property, and his owner valued him as such. However, once apprehended in

Virginia, Abram received a different form of valuation as he became someone's property once again. Soon, Abram became valued in other terms associated with maintenance and as a hired-out slave.

Sometimes, values ascribed to slaves – such as purchase, maintenance, and insurance – were numbers given to the slaves while still enslaved and lacked description and explanation. When escaped, runaway values are the real-world implication of a slaveowner losing their property. If they valued their property for what they were at that time – economic driving forces – slaveowners did not waste time, money, or description to get their property back. Runaway slaves form a pivotal aspect in understanding the processes slaveowners used to constantly manipulate a slave's worth.

CONCLUSION – “SLAVE LIVES MATTER”

This thesis initially stemmed from an idea to use statistical methods to better understand slave values in the Albemarle. However, over time, this research revealed numerous documents that augmented this approach. For example, slave indentures and bills of sale were fundamentally different from hiring receipts, court petitions, and wills and probate records. Therefore, adding these documents into a singular database does an injustice to not only the slaves stories but also to the discipline of history itself. In other words, statistics were useful for telling part of a story, but there was an important narrative that was revealed that went beyond the statistical data. Slavery in the Albemarle reveals that slaveowners maintained intensely regulated networks to meet the supply and demand of slave labor, even in a localized area.

In short, the organization of materials to produce this thesis necessitated a balance of statistical analysis with archival narratives. The stories of Abram, Jesse Blanchard’s runaway slave, and Mary Barbour, for example, demanded description and individual analysis. Using these sources in concert with cliometrics historiography, geo-spatial rendering, historical fiction, and archaeological excavations offered the best insights into a case study of slave economics.

As in the past, American society finds itself today in dire race relations. Instead of villainizing a populace that seeks authority and change, history offers insights into the processes that created an atmosphere for renewed discussions of the “worthiness” of the black population. Thanks to renewed interest in American slavery – along with acknowledging slavery as a foundation of capitalism – scholars continually engage in scholarly debate and discourse on slave values, economic or personal. It is upon this foundation that this thesis is based.

To an audience outside of the state, the Albemarle is not a region famous for its slave past. Outside of the fundamental understandings of Harriet Jacobs and Moses Grandy, few works

intrinsically focus on the region as an area defined by political and economic functions.³¹²

However, the role this area of North Carolina played in America's "peculiar institution" paints a telling scene of the real-world implications of a slave-based society and economy.

Slave society in the Albemarle exemplified the economic "1%." Few slaveholders owned substantial numbers of slaves, and therefore increased overall profits and reinvested this money in industries such as shipping and other maritime trades. In addition, they then established significant trade relationships throughout the country and larger Atlantic World.

As early as the 1740s, slaves constituted 25% of Bertie County's population, with the percentage of households that owned slaves in 1751 at 17% and 43% in 1774. Revolutionary and Early Republican periods saw a sharp increase in families that owned five to nine slaves, increasing to 8.3 slaves in 1790. This trend continued in the decades leading to the Civil War. Slaveowners imported slaves into the region during this period, thereby increasing the average slave holdings of these families from 14.3 in 1840 to 17.5 in 1860. Additionally, "two of the fifteen planters in North Carolina who possessed at least 200 slaves resided in Bertie."³¹³

Much like Bertie, Perquimans County saw a rather slow slave system in the last decades of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This was probably due to the average acreage that landowners possessed in the period. Watson also found that, in 1790, the other neighboring counties, specifically, Pasquotank and Camden, averaged the smallest landholdings in the state. Corresponding to these numbers, slaveowners tended to own fewer slaves per household, around 5.8 slaves in 1790. Obviously, some planters owned substantial numbers of slaves, but this

³¹² For an earlier examination of the Albemarle's slave past, see Robert S. Thompson, "'A Fair Return for the Investment in Money and Labour'": Slavery from 1695 to 1802 in North Carolina's Albemarle Region." Master's thesis, East Carolina University, 2002.

³¹³ Alan D. Watson, *Bertie County: A Brief History* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, 1982), 6, 10, 12.

changed over time. By the Civil War, Perquimans County residents owned more slaves on average than the state as a whole: 13.7 slaves per household in Perquimans versus 9.5 in the state.³¹⁴ Examining a locality that had a different relationship to slavery demonstrates how white society understood to take advantage of slave labor.

More affluent residents of the region bankrolled those in lower echelons of the society. Middle-class slaveowners sometimes profited off the backs of slaves, but sometimes they also lost their economic livelihood to the institution they defended. In a sense, Phillips and Stamppp agreed: at times, slaveowners were “victims” of slavery. Ironically, the grand idea of paternalistic obligation of owners to slaves was the undoing of a planter’s economic fortune. This resulted from – as Stamppp stated – “the master’s genuine love for his slave...but made him [the slave] into something less than a man.”³¹⁵

This relationship, of course, was not of equals, but resembled that of a parent and child. It also encouraged masters to increase their slaveholdings for “humanitarian” reasons. In fact, this resulted in the infantilization of the slave, which succeeded in defining masculinity and femininity of slaves in America. Stamppp found cases that stated slaveowners *valued* slaves for being “interesting creatures” and childish.³¹⁶ Thus, in many cases, slaveowners purchased slaves without due diligence to the economic ramifications of purchasing chattel. This thesis also demonstrates that slaves in the Albemarle exercised autonomy and understood their financial and personal valuation through various means.

Overall, the Albemarle’s slave system was unique for various reasons. Slavery in urban settings, such as Elizabeth City and Edenton, was inherently different than slavery deeper in the

³¹⁴ Alan D. Watson, *Perquimans County: A Brief History* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, 1987), 43.

³¹⁵ Stamppp, *Peculiar*, 327.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 327-329.

state. These port cities afforded unique opportunities for slaves. Hired slaves interacted with other hired property, expanded their social network, became familiar with various environs, and continually enhanced their skilled workmanship. These all afforded chances for slaves to find repeated escapes from bondage. The constant influx of shipping into and from the Albemarle, and even some ships into the Caribbean, were a constant reminder that slaves capitalized on every chance possible to be themselves. A lucky few enacted autonomy over their lives, thereby refuting the valuations ascribed by their owners. This corresponded with the overarching hypocrisies and paradoxes of antebellum American slavery. In short, the Albemarle was a direct representation of many other societies.

Over time, slave owners enacted changes to reinforce the slave regime in America. These measures included the varying ways that slaves became property: bequests in wills and probate records, gifting to family or close friends and associates, division of estates, court petitions, and others. All of these methods further implemented slavery in the New World from the outset of European occupation in America. These complexities entrenched paternalistic sentiments and made slaveowners balk at the idea of emancipation. Eventually, slave societies in America maintained a circuitous path: first, slaves became property, whether from bills of sale or inherited within a family; next, slaves received “care” from their masters on various scales, leaving the slave alone to hope for a kind master; afterwards, slaves sometimes became hired or even insured for their anticipated valuation; and lastly, slaveowners utilized a final economic system of valuation – that of runaway slaves – to value the loss of property.

If a slave was recaptured, then the cycle repeated itself without end. Even the very act of hiring out slaves intended to be a way for less-fortunate whites to procure slave labor. However, this, like other slave-related enterprises, became lucrative. Even neglecting the business aspects

of slavery, slaves themselves always found ways around the systems of bondage in America. It is with this understanding that slavery in the Albemarle demands larger emphasis.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Archival Sources

East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

Albert Morris Collection (#19)
Brownrigg Family Papers (#597)
Hollowell Family Papers (#578)
Murfreesboro Historical Association Collection: J. T. Lewter Papers (#691-001)
Murfreesboro Historical Association Collection: Wynns Family Papers (#691-002)
Nelson M. Ferebee Papers (#404)
Richard Dillard Papers (#599)
Thomas Newby Papers (#295)
Timothy Hunter Papers (#748)
Veale Family Papers (#722)

Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Leigh and Winslow Family Papers #4028
Lewis Thompson Papers #716
P. H. Winston Papers #963-z
Skinner Family Papers #699
Tyler Family Papers #4810

Museum of the Albemarle, Division of State History Museums, North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Elizabeth City, North Carolina.

Cox Collection

State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C.

Bertie County Slave Records, CR 010.928
Camden County Miscellaneous Records, CR 018.928
Chowan County Miscellaneous Slave Records, CR 024.928
Currituck County Miscellaneous Records, CR 030.928
Pasquotank County Records of Slaves and Free Persons of Color, CR 075.928
Perquimans County Slave Records, CR 077.928
Slave Collection, PC 1629
Tyrrell County Records of Slaves and Free Persons of Color, CR 096.928

Edited Collections

My Folks Don't Want Me to Talk about Slavery. Edited by Belinda Hurmence. Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1984.

Slavery Time When I was Chillun. Edited by Belinda Hurmence. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1997.

Maps

Gwynn, Walter. [Untitled map showing area from Edenton northeast to the Dismal Swamp Canal]. Map. [1830s]. From the State Archives of North Carolina, MC. 136-A.

Lathrop, John. *Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal connecting Chesapeake Bay with Currituck, Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds and their tributary streams*. Map. New York: Hosford & Co., 1858. From the North Carolina Collection of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Cm912.02 1858L.

Newspapers

Albemarle Bulletin (Edenton), 1850-1851.

The Albemarle Enquirer (Murfreesboro), 1878.

American Banner (Edenton), 1856.

American Recorder (Washington, N.C.), 1819-1821.

Carolina Observer (Fayetteville), 1827.

The Democratic Pioneer (Elizabeth City), 1854-1856.

Edenton Gazette (Edenton), 1816-1831.

Edenton Sentinel and Albemarle Intelligencer (Edenton), 1841.

Elizabeth City Star and North Carolina-Eastern Intelligencer (Elizabeth City), 1826-1833.

Herald of the Times (Elizabeth City), 1836.

The Intelligencer and Nag's Head Advocate (Elizabeth City), 1841.

Newbern Spectator and Literary Journal (New Bern), 1834-1838.

The Old North State (Elizabeth City), 1849.

North Carolina Miscellany (Edenton), 1832-1833.

North Carolina Native Sentinel (Elizabeth City), 1856.

People's Press (Wilmington), 1834.

Raleigh Register and North Carolina Weekly Advertiser (Raleigh), 1818-1826.

Semi-Weekly Standard (Raleigh), 1855.

The Weekly Standard (Raleigh), 1849.

Slave Memoirs

Grandy, Moses. *Narrative of the Life of Moses Grandy, Late a Slave of the United States of America*. Boston: Oliver Johnson, 1844.

Jacobs, Harriet A. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl Written by Herself*. Edited by Jean Fagan Yellin. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Secondary Sources

Articles

- Blackburn, Marion. "American Refugees." *Archaeology* 64, no. 5 (2011).
- Conrad, Alfred H. and John R. Meyer. "The Economics of Slavery in the Ante Bellum South." *The Journal of Political Economy* 66, no. 2 (Apr., 1958): 95-130.
- Foust, James D. "Review: The Political Economy of Slavery, Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South." *Southern Economic Journal* 32, no. 4 (Apr. 1966): 486-487.
- Loring, Stephen. "Not So Dismal Any More," *Archaeology* 64, no. 6 (2011).
- Robinson, G. Canby. "Malaria in Virginia in the Early Nineteenth Century." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 32, no. 6 (1958): 531-536.
- Savitt, Todd L. "Slave Life Insurance in Virginia and North Carolina." *The Journal of Southern History* 43, no. 4 (Nov., 1977): 583-600.
- Smith, John David. "'I Was Raised Poor and Hard as Any Slave': African American Slavery in Piedmont North Carolina." *The North Carolina Historical Review* 90, no. 1 (Jan., 2013): 1-25.
- Stampf, Kenneth M. "Reconsidering U. B. Phillips: A Comment." *Agricultural History* 41, no. 4 (Oct., 1967): 365-368.
- . "The Historian and Southern Negro Slavery." *The American Historical Review* 57, no. 3 (Apr., 1952): 613-624.
- Thompson, Holland. "Review: *Slaveholding in North Carolina: An Economic View*." *The North Carolina Historical Review* 4, no. 4 (Oct., 1927): 490-491.
- Wright, Gavin. "Review: *The Slavery Community: Plantation Life in the Ante-Bellum South* by John W. Blassingame." *The Business History Review* 47, no. 3 (1973): 386-388.
- Woodman, Harold D. "The Profitability of Slavery: A Historical Perennial." *The Journal of Southern History* 29, no. 3 (Aug., 1963): 303-325.

Books

- Baptist, Edward E. *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*. New York: Basic Books, 2014.
- Berry, Daina Ramey. *The Price for their Pound of Flesh: The Value of the Enslaved, from Womb to Grave, in the Building of a Nation*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2017.

- Blassingame, John W. *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Cecelski, David S. *The Waterman's Song: Slavery and Freedom in Maritime North Carolina*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001.
- Conrad, Alfred H. and John R. Meyer. *The Economics of Slavery: And Other Studies in Econometric History*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1964.
- Elkins, Stanley M. *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968, 2nd edition.
- Fogel, Robert William and Stanley L. Engerman. *Time on the Cross*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1974.
- Fuentes, Marisa J. *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016.
- Genovese, Eugene D. *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South*. New York: Vintage Books, 1965.
- Gutman, Herbert G. *Slavery and the Numbers Game: A Critique of Time on the Cross*. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1975.
- Long, Gretchen. *Doctoring Freedom: The Politics of African American Medical Care in Slavery and Emancipation*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012.
- Parker, Freddie L. *Running for Freedom: Slave Runaways in North Carolina, 1775-1840*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1993.
- Phillips, Ulrich Bonnell. *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1929.
- Pugh, Jesse F. *Three Hundred Years Along the Pasquotank*. Durham, N.C.: Seeman Printery, 1957.
- Stampp, Kenneth M. *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South*. Toronto: Vintage Books, 1956.
- Stevenson, Brenda E. *What is Slavery?* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2015.
- Taylor, Rosser Howard. *Slaveholding in North Carolina: An Economic View*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1926.

Watson, Alan D. *Bertie County: A Brief History*. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1982.

———. *Perquimans County: A Brief History*. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1987.

Whitehead, Colson. *The Underground Railroad*. New York: Doubleday, 2016.

Theses

Perry, Darlene M. "A Profitable, but Risky Business: Slave Hiring in Colonial and Antebellum Eastern North Carolina." Master's thesis, East Carolina University, 2004.

Thompson, Robert S. "'A Fair Return for the Investment in Money and Labour'": Slavery from 1695 to 1802 in North Carolina's Albemarle Region." Master's thesis, East Carolina University, 2002.

Edited Collections

Historical Sketches of Hertford County. Edited by John Wheeler Moore. Winton, North Carolina: Liberty Shield Press, 1998.

North Carolina Slaves, 1826-1865: Articles and Advertisements in the Greensborough Patriot Newspaper. Edited by Bradley R. Foley. Madison, North Carolina: Smith River Publishers, 2015.

Science and Medicine in the Old South. Edited by Ronald L. Numbers and Todd L. Savitt. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989.

Of Tar Heel Towns, Shipbuilders, Reconstructionists and Alliancemen: Papers in North Carolina History. Edited by Joseph F. Steelman. Greenville, N.C.: East Carolina University Publications, 1981.

Websites

"N.C. Runaway Slave Advertisements." <http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/RAS> (accessed October 4, 2017).

"Stanley M. Elkins (1935-2013), Obituary," Daily Hampshire Gazette (Northampton, MA) September 17, 2013. Date accessed January 10, 2018. <<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/gazettenet/obituary.aspx?n=stanley-m-elkins&pid=167001369>>

APPENDICES

Appendix 1.1

Valuation of William B. Clark's slaves, determined by age group

Slave Age Group	Mean Value in Dollars	N	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Child	281.82	11	127.52	100.00	500.00
Boy/Girl	657.14	7	123.92	500.00	800.00
Man/Woman	654.17	12	292.68	100.00	1000.00
Elderly	493.57	7	340.89	5.00	1000.00
Total	513.65	37	282.32	5.00	1000.00

Source: Valuation of 38 slaves, circa 1850; Lewis Thompson Papers (#716).

Appendix 1.2

Sources:

East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

Brownrigg Family Papers (#597)
Murfreesboro Historical Association Collection Wynns Family Papers (#691-002)
Timothy Hunter Papers (#748)
Veale Family Papers (#722)

Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

P. H. Winston Papers, #963-z
Lewis Thompson Papers, #716

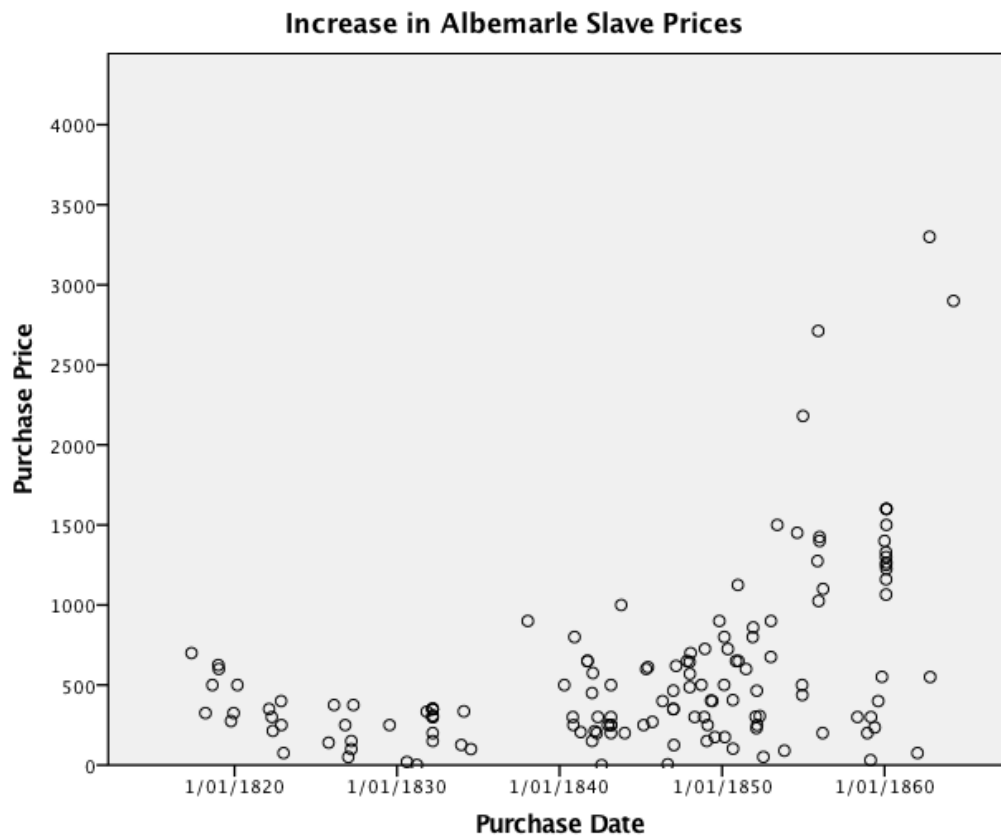
Museum of the Albemarle, Division of State History Museums, North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Elizabeth City, North Carolina.

Cox Collection

State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C.

Camden County Miscellaneous Records, CR 018.928
Chowan County Miscellaneous Slave Records, CR 024.928
Pasquotank County Records of Slaves and Free Persons of Color, CR 075.928
Perquimans County Slave Records, CR 077.928
Slave Collection, PC 1629
Tyrrell County Records of Slaves and Free Persons of Color, CR 096.928

Appendix 1.3



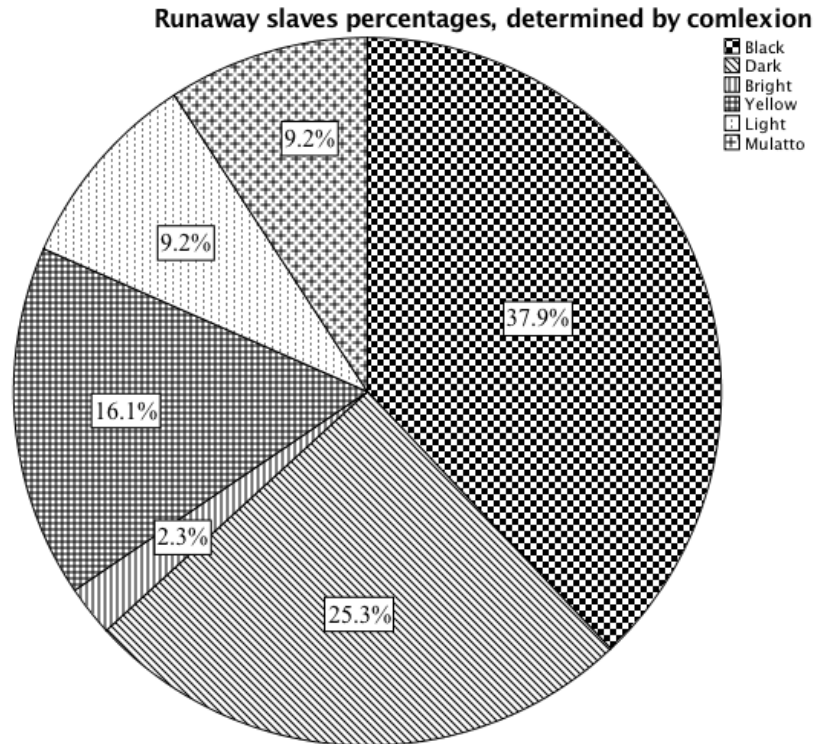
Appendix 3.1

Captain Timothy Hunter's insured slaves

Name	Sex	Purchase Date	Purchase Price (in USD)	Insurance Date	Insurance Amount (in USD)	Annual Premium (in USD)
Davie	Male	N/A	N/A	May 16, 1849	400.00	5.40
Alfred	Male	N/A	N/A	February 18, 1853	600.00	12.24
Emanuel	Male	N/A	N/A	February 18, 1853	600.00	12.66
Stephen	Male	N/A	N/A	February 18, 1853	500.00	9.90
Jim Keaton	Male	January 18, 1842	575.00	February 18, 1853	300.00	9.06
Daniel	Male	June 10, 1845	611.50	February 18, 1853	600.00	13.20
Miles	Male	April 24, 1849	403.00	February 18, 1853	500.00	13.05
Jim	Male	January 1, 1853	675.00	February 18, 1853	600.00	10.62
George	Male	April 16, 1840	500.00	February 18, 1853	700.00	13.86
Jerry	Male	April 30, 1845	600.00	February 18, 1853	500.00	12.25
Charles	Male	N/A	N/A	February 10, 1854	400.00	7.08
Harriet	Female	N/A	N/A	February 10, 1854	400.00	7.08
Penny	Female	N/A	N/A	February 10, 1854	600.00	10.62
Sue	Female	N/A	N/A	February 10, 1854	500.00	12.75
Fanny	Female	March 3, 1842	212.50	February 10, 1854	700.00	13.16
Seth	Male	N/A	N/A	January 23, 1855	800.00	15.12
William	Male	N/A	N/A	January 23, 1855	800.00	15.12
Solomon	Male	October 30, 1849	900.00	February 23, 1855	666.00	16.78
Alfred Whidbee	Male	January 1, 1856	1,400.00	January 15, 1856	1,000.00	19.80
Caleb	Male	January 1, 1856	1,425.00	January 15, 1856	1,000.00	19.40

Source: Timothy Hunter Papers (#748.2 and oversize).

Appendix 4.1



Sources: *Elizabeth City Star and North Carolina Eastern Intelligencer* (Elizabeth City), 1826-1833; *Edenton Gazette* (Edenton), 1816-1831; *Newbern Spectator and Literary Journal* (Newbern), 1834-1838; *Raleigh Register and North Carolina Weekly Advertiser* (Raleigh), 1818-1826; *Carolina Observer* (Fayetteville), 1827; *People's Press* (Wilmington), 1834; *American Recorder* (Washington, N.C.), 1819-182; *Edenton Sentinel and Albemarle Intelligencer* (Edenton), 1841; *Herald of the Times* (Elizabeth City), 1836; *The Intelligencer and Nag's Head Advocate* (Elizabeth City), 1841; *North Carolina Native Sentinel* (Elizabeth City), 1856; *North Carolina Miscellany* (Edenton), 1832-1833; *Albemarle Bulletin* (Edenton), 1850-1851; *American Banner* (Edenton), 1856; *The Democratic Pioneer* (Elizabeth City), 1854-1856; *The Old North State* (Elizabeth City), 1849.

Appendix 4.2

Average Runaway Reward, determined by slave sex

Sample Slave Sex		Reward Amount (in county)	Reward Amount (other county)	Reward Amount (other state)
Male	Mean	31.82	29.61	58.75
	N	77	13	16
	Std. Deviation	23.44	11.63	35.94
	Maximum	100.00	50.00	150.00
	Minimum	10.00	15.00	20.00
Female	Mean	26.11	17.50	50.0000
	N	27	2	1
	Std. Deviation	26.07	10.61	.
	Maximum	100.00	25.00	50.00
	Minimum	.00	10.00	50.00
Total	Mean	30.34	28.00	58.24
	N	104	15	17
	Std. Deviation	24.15	11.92	34.86
	Maximum	100.00	50.00	150.00
	Minimum	.00	10.00	20.00

Sources: *Ibid.*

Appendix 4.3

Average Runaway Reward, determined by age descriptor

New Sample Slave Age		Reward Amount (in county)	Reward Amount (other county)	Reward Amount (other state)
Boy/Girl	Mean	25.88	20.00	46.67
	N	17	4	3
	Std. Deviation	16.42	5.77	46.19
	Maximum	50.00	25.00	100.00
	Minimum	5.00	15.00	20.00
Man/Woman	Mean	31.34	30.91	60.71
	N	82	11	14
	Std. Deviation	25.99	12.41	33.62
	Maximum	100.00	50.00	150.00
	Minimum	.00	10.00	20.00
Total	Mean	30.40	28.00	58.24
	N	99	15	17
	Std. Deviation	24.64	11.92	34.86
	Maximum	100.00	50.00	150.00
	Minimum	.00	10.00	20.00

Sources: *Ibid.*

Appendix 4.4

Average Runaway Slave Reward, determined by age groups

Sample Slave Age in Brackets		Reward Amount (in county)	Reward Amount (other county)	Reward Amount (other state)
to 19 years old	Mean	29.38	18.33	30.00
	N	16	3	3
	Std. Deviation	25.36	5.77	17.32
	Minimum	5.00	15.00	20.00
	Maximum	100.00	25.00	50.00
20 to 29 years old	Mean	33.51	31.67	60.00
	N	37	6	8
	Std. Deviation	25.49	10.80	25.63
	Minimum	10.00	25.00	30.00
	Maximum	100.00	50.00	100.00
30 to 39 years old	Mean	35.67	38.33	67.50
	N	15	3	4
	Std. Deviation	28.71	12.58	56.79
	Minimum	5.00	25.00	20.00
	Maximum	100.00	50.00	150.00
at least 40 years old	Mean	20.71	10.00	
	N	7	1	
	Std. Deviation	15.12	.	
	Minimum	5.00	10.00	
	Maximum	50.00	10.00	
Total	Mean	31.87	28.46	56.00
	N	75	13	15
	Std. Deviation	25.27	12.81	35.42
	Minimum	5.00	10.00	20.00
	Maximum	100.00	50.00	150.00

Sources: *Ibid.*

Appendix 4.5

Average Runaway Slave Reward, determined by complexion

Sample Slave Complexion		Reward Amount (in county)	Reward Amount (other county)	Reward Amount (other state)
Black	Mean	31.61	31.25	57.14
	N	31	4	7
	Std. Deviation	20.39	12.50	31.47
	Minimum	10.00	25.00	20.00
	Maximum	100.00	50.00	100.00
Dark	Mean	29.74	28.00	54.00
	N	19	5	5
	Std. Deviation	28.21	13.04	28.81
	Minimum	.00	15.00	20.00
	Maximum	100.00	50.00	100.00
Bright	Mean	22.50	40.00	
	N	2	1	
	Std. Deviation	3.54	.	
	Minimum	20.00	40.00	
	Maximum	25.00	40.00	
Yellow	Mean	22.14	20.00	20.00
	N	14	2	1
	Std. Deviation	13.83	7.07	.
	Minimum	5.00	15.00	20.00
	Maximum	50.00	25.00	20.00
Light	Mean	47.86	32.50	75.00
	N	7	2	4
	Std. Deviation	37.62	10.61	50.00
	Minimum	10.00	25.00	50.00
	Maximum	100.00	40.00	150.00
Mulatto	Mean	35.63		
	N	8		
	Std. Deviation	16.99		
	Minimum	5.00		
	Maximum	50.00		
Total	Mean	31.11	29.29	58.24
	N	81	14	17
	Std. Deviation	23.25	11.24	34.86

Minimum	.00	15.00	20.00
Maximum	100.00	50.00	150.00

Sources: *Ibid*

Appendix 4.6

Average Runaway Slave Reward, determined by race

New Sample Race		Reward Amount (in county)	Reward Amount (other county)	Reward Amount (other state)
Negro	Mean	30.90	29.44	55.83
	N	50	9	12
	Std. Deviation	23.40	12.10	29.06
	Minimum	.00	15.00	20.00
	Maximum	100.00	50.00	100.00
Mulatto	Mean	31.45	29.00	64.00
	N	31	5	5
	Std. Deviation	23.39	10.84	49.80
	Minimum	5.00	15.00	20.00
	Maximum	100.00	40.00	150.00
Total	Mean	31.11	29.29	58.24
	N	81	14	17
	Std. Deviation	23.25	11.24	34.86
	Minimum	.00	15.00	20.00
	Maximum	100.00	50.00	150.00

Sources: *Ibid.*