

Caswell County, NC

1840's Tobacco and Slave Trading Ledger Collection

"April 8th, 1841 I have just learned with great sorrow that President Harrison is no more- the whole Nation should, yes, I believe they will mourn, Great God what a calamity, Oh, Lord receive him. Blessed be they who die in the name of the Lord."

The ledger consists of 148 pages of recorded tobacco and slave trading information dating from 1837 to 1845. There are letters, bills of sale and other documents dating from 1837-1855.

Part I Tobacco

The first part of the ledger concerns the prizing, buying and selling of tobacco from Caswell County plantations. Important facts such as person selling tobacco, the type and condition of the crop, and location sold are recorded. It is also noted how the tobacco is transported to market. The tobacco was prized into hogsheads. The hogsheads weighed about 1400 lbs full. The hogsheads were taken to Milton on heavy wagons. Once in Milton the hogsheads were loaded onto a bateaux and shipped via the Dan River to the market in Danville, Virginia.

Caswell County		North Carolina	
Tuesday Crop	121500	45	04 87 1/2
Do	6658	3	37
Do Do	18945	9	90 01
" "	13692	7	67 "
	51445	25	98 87 1/2
Wares	1552	1	00
	53000	26	98 87 1/2
add 10 pr Cent for Comm		2	69 80
			329 68 67 1/2
Received for Tob. up to May		28	74
1841		26	58 87 1/2
\$941-40 Danville	\$941.40	2	15 "
also Lynchburg			
Richmond	206 56	927 06	
Do	355 57		
Do	567 13		
Petersburg	69 20	786 47	
"	368 29		
"	408 98		
		2654 93	20 54 93
Clear Loss		3	13 74
Or to be accounted for			44 26
			558 "

Caswell County North Carolina
 July 20, 1841 Tobacco sold in
 Lynchburg, Richmond, and Petersburg.

Part II Slave Trading

The second part of the ledger is a rare and important record of the North Carolina, Virginia and South Carolina slave trade during the 1840's. Expansion of the cotton kingdom during the 1830's greatly increased the demand for slave labor in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi. The need for slave labor began to decline in the old tobacco belt region of the upper south. Many enslaved people were "sold south" as a result of debt and estate settlements and economic conditions.



Paty Arroy	3 20
Grland...	3 40
Sandy	5 06
John Brown	5 00
Simpson	4 75
Bob	5 00
Tom & Hannah	8 00
Hanny Stude	3 62 1/2
Nancy Wray	3 99
Extra for Bob	49 90
Clothing & Bill	14 1/2
Cash p ^d to Surry	22.85
Surry Co.	3 95

A list of enslaved people by name, some are recorded with surname.
The cost of the trip to Surry County, NC for the auction is noted as \$22.85.

Restoration of the ledger

The ledger required a great deal of restoration. During the 1870's it was used as a scrapbook for recipes and remedies clipped from newspapers. The pasted on clippings covered almost half of the information in the ledger. The newspaper clippings had to be hand steamed and carefully removed one at a time. The ledger also lost its cover along the way. The lost cover was replaced with an 1840's style cover bound with leather. Each page was cleaned and stabilized. The Etherington Conservation Group located in Browns Summit, NC restored the ledger and two of the slavery documents.

