

Brief History Of Slavery In The County

No Large Number Of Slaves Ever Held In County

Hardly Fourth of Families Had Human Chattels in Late 18th Century

Many histories have been written and at least one war has been fought over slavery in this country. While Martin County had its slaves and a part in recorded history and the war, it was never a large slave-holding county. In fact, there were more common whites who fared little better than slaves.

The first official United States census placed the number of slaves at 1,889 in this county back in 1790, the number reaching 4,309 just before the war.

Back in 1790 less than a dozen families owned nearly a third of the slaves. Whitmill Hill, one of the early political leaders in the county, owned the largest number—140. William Williams, the man whom Williamston was named for, owned 94. Thomas Hunter, the man who gave the site for Williamston, owned 44 slaves. Others owning 30 slaves or more were, Blake Williams, 43; John Anthony, 33; Francis Ward, 32; Samuel Smithwick, 31, and Hodges Moore, 30. A few owned between 20 and 30, but in most of the other cases there was seldom more than one or two slaves owned by a single family. Altogether there were 254 slaveowners, but 541 of the 795 families owned no

PROHIBITION

Apparently they had prohibition in Martin County one hundred years ago. At least the business was not recognized by the official United States census for the year 1840. The census report definitely states that no wine was made in the county and records no liquor manufacturing for the period.

Possibly the illicit trade was present, but like the illicit trade of today there were no official records kept and the type and extent of the business, if any, were not preserved for posterity.

slaves.

While the number of slaves was almost doubled from 1790 down to the Civil War, the number of free colored persons was more than three times greater in 1860 than in 1790 in this county.

In 1790 there were only thirteen other counties in the State with more free colored persons than there were in Martin.

Seventy years later the population had almost doubled, but the number of slave owners had increased from 254 to only 368. The small slave owner was gradually passing out of the picture during that period, while the number of large owners was more than three times greater in 1860 than in 1790. Just before the war, the 368 persons owned slaves in the following numbers: 59 had one each; 36 had two, 22 had three each, 25 had four, 19 had

AT SAME OLD STAND



Picking up where they left off last year, Messrs. S. Claude Griffin, left, and Jimmie Taylor, right, are all set for another tobacco marketing season at the same old stand—The Roanoke-Dixie Warehouse in Williamston. Backed by experience and what it takes to run a tobacco warehouse, these two men are looking forward to a successful season.

five, 20 had six, 17 had seven, 22 had eight, 12 had nine, 52 had between 10 and 15; 33 had between 15 and 20; 30 had between 20 and 30; 14 had between 30 and 40; six had between 40 and 50; six had between 50 and 60; three had between 70 and 100, and two had between 100 and 200.

The late Maj. Gen. Smedley D. Butler of the U. S. Marine Corps, predicted in 1937 that World War II would start within two years. It did.

Flutists Troy To Make Pete Tweet

History records that once the United States Marines did not have the situation well in hand. Pete, a canary bird, was scheduled to perform with the U. S. Marine Corps Band, but he went on a sit down strike. Forty-five minutes of persuasion by the flutists of the band failed to produce results.

Slaves Lived To A Ripe Old Age

No one thinks much about it, but one will have to admit that it is a bit unusual for former slaves to outlive their masters and their other contemporaries of the white population. There are quite a number of former slaves living in Martin County today. After all the Confederate soldiers had passed on to their reward in this county there were quite a few former slaves still struggling along. There were Pompey Williams, Carey Moore and others, and they were older than many of those who had seen service in battle.

Back in 1840 there were 2,816 slaves in this county. More than 200 of them were between 55 and 100 years of age, but well over a third was under ten years of age. It would appear that the slave owners in this county preferred or found it cheaper or necessary to raise their own slaves rather than enter the market.

The following figures show the slave population in the county in 1840 by age groups:

	Male	Female
Under 10 years	502	614
Between 10 and 24	375	419
Between 24 and 36	213	222
Between 36 and 55	183	183
Between 55 and 100	122	83
	2816	1421

As far as it can be determined from the records, slaves attained a greater age than did the free colored, few of the free group being listed over 55 years of age.

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