**Antebellum North Carolina**

The years 1830-1860 were a period of history when North Carolina was referred to as the “Rip Van Winkle” state for its refusal to make internal improvements and reforms of government, while immense changes did occur here. Why were the Cherokee forcibly removed from their ancient homelands? How did the re-discovery of a vast lake and the rich lands around it lead to the development of one of the state’s largest plantations? As always, what your life was like varied mightily, depending upon your place in society.

In this educational packet:

- Read “Cherokee Life Just Before the Removal” Opening Windows onto Antebellum North Carolina” from the Fall 2010 issue of the *Tar Heel Junior Historian* Magazine.
- Complete the “Math of Removal” worksheet.
- Read “Opening Windows onto Antebellum North Carolina” from the Fall 2010 issue of the *Tar Heel Junior Historian* Magazine.
- Watch *Uniquely Somerset: LIVE!* for an archived class where we explored the rich and complex stories of the people and spaces that make up Somerset Place, one of the largest plantations in North Carolina’s antebellum history.
- For more information, read the article “The Slave Community at Somerset Place” from the Fall 1995 issue of the *Tar Heel Junior Historian* Magazine.
- Test your knowledge by answering a few discussion questions.
- Create your own board and play a game of mancala!
- Discover clothing from the 1860s with pages you can color.
Cherokee Life Just Before the Removal

By Dr. Barbara Duncan*

From Tar Heel Junior Historian 50:1 (fall 2010).

Images may differ from those in the original article.

For more than 10,000 years, Cherokee people have called the Mountain region of North Carolina home. Three thousand years ago, these American Indians were living in permanent, organized towns—making pottery, hunting with bows and arrows, and growing plants like squash, sunflowers, and gourds. But by 1800, with more and more European settlers arriving in the area, the tribe had lost over three-fourths of its vast homeland through a series of treaties. Over three-fourths of its people had died from diseases like smallpox.

In 1838 the United States government forced most Cherokee throughout the southern Appalachian region to move west to Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). Some stayed because they owned land in their own names, while others hid in remote areas until the soldiers left, and a few walked back from Indian Territory. They became the great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers of the modern-day Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The tribe continues to live on a small part of its ancestral land known as the Qualla Boundary, in parts of Swain, Jackson, Cherokee, Graham, and Haywood counties. Little visible evidence remains on the landscape of antebellum Cherokee life just before and during the Removal to Indian Territory, a trip many people today know as the Trail of Tears. But in the town of Cherokee, the Museum of the Cherokee Indian uses archaeology, documents, oral traditions and mythology, and other evidence to piece together the story.

In the early antebellum period, which began around 1820, the Cherokee Nation was centered in northwest Georgia, where the town of New Echota served as the capital. New Echota included a council house, Supreme Court building, missionary’s home, farmhouses, and a newspaper office with a printing press that published the Cherokee Phoenix in English and in the Cherokee language. Council minutes, court records, letters, and correspondence provide a lot of information about daily life, as do old copies of the newspaper. The Cherokee Nation included about 16,000 people divided into eight districts. It had a very organized government, justice system, and police force. Christian missionaries taught Cherokee children to read, write, and sing hymns in English. The Bible was being translated into the Indians’ language. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1832 that the tribe represented a sovereign nation within the United States, with the right to govern itself.

Before Removal
In 1820 more than 7,000 Cherokee lived in present-day western North Carolina, most of them on the tribal lands, west of the Nantahala Mountains. Some had claimed land in their own names after the Treaty of 1819. This treaty allowed a Cherokee man or woman to own up to 640 acres. This was a difficult choice for Cherokee people—who traditionally believed that everyone
shared the land—but some chose to claim land as a way to keep from being pushed out of the places their ancestors had lived for so long.

In the Great Smoky Mountains, Cherokee people lived along the rivers as they had always done. What they called the Middle Towns clustered along the Little Tennessee River beginning at its headwaters and going to the Nantahala Mountains—about 16 towns in 40 miles. The seven Out Towns stood along the Tuckasegee, Oconaluftee, and Nantahala rivers, including the town of Nunayi, where the town of Cherokee is today. The Valley Towns followed the Valley River to its junction with the Hiwassee (at present-day Murphy, in Cherokee County). Several other towns were located in the Cheoah Valley.

Most Cherokee families in western North Carolina in the early 1830s were full-blooded, meaning that only a few people had married and had children with people from outside the tribe. About 12 Cherokee men owned plantations and enslaved African Americans; only 37 slaves were counted in the Cherokee Nation in western North Carolina. Most Cherokee lived on small farms. Even on their farms, everyone considered themselves part of a community. Every community had a council house where people gathered to hear the news, make decisions, and dance. Even when people had to move off tribal land, they kept their communities together. About 25 percent of the people could read and write the Cherokee language.

In 1835, in preparation for removing American Indians from their tribal lands, the United States government began studying them. They took a census; made maps and surveys of buildings, trails, and terrain; and sent soldiers to begin building forts in Cherokee country. The census of 1835 offers an incredible amount of information. Most Cherokee homesteads were the farms of a family that included parents and children, or an extended family of at least three generations. Each farm included an average of 14 acres of cultivated ground, most of it in cornfields but also including a vegetable garden. Families had apple trees, peach trees, and cherry trees. Most farms had a cabin, about 20 feet long and 14 feet wide, made of logs with the bark still on, wood shake roofs, packed dirt floors, and a fireplace. Outbuildings included corncribs, barns, stables, and sometimes a hothouse, the traditional _osi_. Families raised cows and hogs (ranging them in the woods), and raised horses for their use or to trade.

From federal records documenting the property that people sent to Indian Territory left behind (“spoilation claims”), we know that families owned dishes of pewter and china, as well as pottery made in the traditional Cherokee way. Families made baskets of rivercane and white oak, as they had for centuries. They raised almost everything they ate but also traded at area stores for blue and white china dishes, cloth, and ribbons. Archaeology of cabin sites from the period and store records confirm this information. Children learned how to do things from their parents. Boys went hunting and fishing with their fathers and learned how to make and use blowguns, bows, and arrows. They learned how to track and hunt animals. Girls helped their mothers on the farm and in the gardens, and went with them into the mountains to gather plants for food and medicine. They learned how to make baskets, pottery, and clothing.

**The Trail of Tears and Beyond**
Congress narrowly passed the Indian Removal Act in 1830, forcing American Indian nations to trade their southern land (which would be resold to whites) for western land. Most Cherokee did
not want to leave their homes. They organized national speaking tours; lobbying efforts in Washington, D.C.; petitions; and newspaper opinion articles. But President Andrew Jackson ignored even the 1832 Supreme Court decision that they were a sovereign nation. A few Cherokee signed the Treaty of New Echota (1835), ratified by one vote in Congress in 1836, and so they all had to leave.

In May 1838 U.S. Army troops and state militias began rounding up the Cherokee. The army had built stockades throughout the Cherokee Nation—North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama. These stockades were just pens, with nowhere to sleep, cook, or use the bathroom. Conditions were very bad. People got sick with whooping cough, measles, and dysentery. Groups did not begin the trip west until September and October. In the process of being rounded up, kept in stockades, and being marched to Oklahoma in cold weather, as many as 4,000 people died. A “roll,” or census, taken in 1841 counted about 1,000 Cherokee remaining in the East. One was Junaluska, the hero of the Battle of Horseshoe Bend in 1814, who had walked back from Oklahoma. Because of his service to the United States, the state of North Carolina gave him 336 acres near Robbinsville, in Graham County, where his gravesite is located today.

In the later antebellum years before the Civil War, some white men made fortunes in the Mountain region. They bought the former Cherokee lands for very little money and harvested timber, minerals, and plants. Nimrod Jarrett in the Nantahala area, for example, harvested tons of valuable ginseng. He employed Cherokee and white men, and used enslaved African American workers, to harvest and transport this crop. Laborers also cut timber and hauled it out of the mountains, built roads, and mined mica. For most Cherokee, life was less prosperous. Their legal status remained uncertain, but they did have a helper: William Holland Thomas. Tribal leader Yonaguska had adopted Thomas, a white man, when he was a young boy. Thomas had become a lawyer who spoke English and Cherokee fluently. He worked tirelessly in Raleigh and in Washington, D.C., to secure the legal rights of Cherokee living in North Carolina. Using money that the people had earned, he bought land for them and held it in his own name until the legal status of the Cherokee was determined, after the Civil War. Holland then returned the land to them, and the Cherokee created the tribal land of about 57,000 acres still held today as the Qualla Boundary. In 1839 Thomas and Yonaguska created seven Cherokee communities to help the people get reorganized. They were located near the Oconaluftee River (present-day Cherokee), Valley River (Andrews), and Cheoah River (Robbinsville).

The Cherokee continued to live self-sufficient lives, with cornfields, gardens, and orchards. They fished, hunted, and gathered wild plants, nuts, and berries. They ranged hogs and cows in the woods. They plowed with mules and oxen and kept a few horses. Plants and prayers were still used for medicine, and some continued making pots and baskets. New traditions like fiddle playing joined old ones like stickball and social and animal dances. People still met in council houses, and they passed on stories of the Removal and the old days to their children and grandchildren.

Most of today’s towns and roads in western North Carolina were built over old Cherokee towns and roads. The town of Cherokee was built atop the community of Qualla, organized after Removal. Before that, in the same place, the town of Nunayi—built around a mound on the Oconaluftee—existed for thousands of years, according to archaeologists, and “what the old
people told me.” When we dig a little, we can rediscover and preserve the stories of the long-ago Cherokee.

*At the time of this article’s publication, Dr. Barbara R. Duncan served as the education director at the Museum of the Cherokee Indian. She is a folklorist who has published several books about the Cherokee, including co-writing the award-winning Cherokee Heritage Trails Guidebook (UNC Press, 2003). For more information, access www.cherokeemuseum.org.*
**Math of Removal Worksheet**

The following are statistics from 13 Cherokee groups that traveled under their own supervision. Use this information to determine the number of days for each journey and the percent of survivors for each group. Then compare the different groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader</th>
<th>Departed</th>
<th>Arrived</th>
<th>No. Departed</th>
<th>No. Arrived</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Hair Conrad</td>
<td>August 23, 1838</td>
<td>January 17, 1839</td>
<td>729</td>
<td>654</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elijah Hicks</td>
<td>September 1, 1838</td>
<td>January 4, 1839</td>
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<td>744</td>
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<td>Jesse Bushyhead</td>
<td>September 3, 1838</td>
<td>February 27, 1839</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>898</td>
</tr>
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<td>September 28, 1838</td>
<td>January 17, 1839</td>
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<tr>
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<td>February 2, 1839</td>
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<td>1,033</td>
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<tr>
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<td>September 24, 1838</td>
<td>February 23, 1839</td>
<td>983</td>
<td>921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moses Daniel</td>
<td>September 30, 1838</td>
<td>March 2, 1839</td>
<td>1,035</td>
<td>924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choowalooka</td>
<td>September 14, 1838</td>
<td>March 5, 1839</td>
<td>1,150</td>
<td>970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Brown</td>
<td>September 10, 1838</td>
<td>March 5, 1839</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Hicks</td>
<td>September 7, 1838</td>
<td>March 14, 1839</td>
<td>1,118</td>
<td>1,039</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Taylor</td>
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<td>March 24, 1839</td>
<td>1,029</td>
<td>942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Hildebrand</td>
<td>October 23, 1838</td>
<td>March 24, 1839</td>
<td>1,766</td>
<td>1,311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Drew</td>
<td>December 5, 1838</td>
<td>March 18, 1839</td>
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<td>21</td>
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Directions: Using the data obtained from the information sheet, record the length of each group’s journey in days and the number of deaths that occurred.

<table>
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<th>Leader</th>
<th>Length of Journey</th>
<th>Number of Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hair Conrad</td>
<td>___________ days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elijah Hicks</td>
<td>___________ days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesse Bushyhead</td>
<td>___________ days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Benge</td>
<td>___________ days</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situwakee</td>
<td>___________ days</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Field</td>
<td>___________ days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moses Daniel</td>
<td>___________ days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choowalooka</td>
<td>___________ days</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Brown</td>
<td>___________ days</td>
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<tr>
<td>George Hicks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Taylor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter Hildebrand</td>
<td>___________ days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Drew</td>
<td>___________ days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which group had the shortest journey?  
Which group had the longest journey?
Opening Windows onto Antebellum North Carolina

by Dr. Lisa Tolbert*

Imagine for a minute that you have been hired to write a chapter for a North Carolina history textbook of the future. What kinds of things would you write about to explain what your daily experience in 2010 was like? What kinds of places might best represent life in the Tar Heel State today? Look around the landscape. Perhaps you would write about supermarkets, gas stations, or big stores like Walmart, for example. What objects might give future students information about life in 2010? Maybe it would be important to describe cell phones, computers, or televisions. What do you have in your bedroom or closet? What work do you do around home or in school? What forms of transportation do you use most often? How do you have fun? Is there one way to describe daily life for everybody in 2010, or do we need to consider different factors—such as whether you live in a big city, in the suburbs, or on a farm?

Now think about other ways that those textbook readers might learn about your life. What sources of information would be important for them to study? Do you write letters, keep a diary, or send instant messages? Do you have a Facebook page? Do you save receipts when you go shopping or take a lot of photos? What would future museum curators need to collect to tell the story of today’s North Carolina? If your house or apartment building is ever preserved as a museum, what kinds of information might it reveal? If your home has a walk-in closet or a television room, for example, what do those ways of organizing space tell us about family life and consumer society in 2010?

This issue of *Tar Heel Junior Historian* gives you the chance to ask some of these same questions about daily life in antebellum North Carolina. The word *antebellum* actually means “before the war.” Historians often describe the time from about the 1820s through the start of the Civil War in 1861 as the antebellum era—a time when politics, westward expansion, and economic and social change set the stage for conflict. Your history textbook may describe these years by focusing on such issues as the debate over slavery, the transportation revolution, the expansion of the cotton economy, the Cherokee Removal, or reform movements in education, politics, and

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*Dr. Lisa Tolbert is an associate professor of history at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where she teaches courses on American cultural history, architectural history, and historical research methods. She earned her doctorate from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her first book focused on antebellum life in small-town middle Tennessee. Dr. Tolbert served as conceptual editor for this issue of Tar Heel Junior Historian.*

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"A spirit of improvement has been abroad."

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Time was when every North Carolinian in travelling from Wilmington to Weldon was certain to have his feelings wounded at the sneering remarks of 'scorners' and 'witlings' as they defamed the Old North State for her poverty of soil and primi- vate style of log cabin buildings. Since that time, a spirit of improvement has been abroad; pine barrens have become fruitful; wild weeds have given place to cereal grains; esculent herbs and luscious fruits, and the modern neatly painted mansions have long since supplanted the 'log cabins' of the early pioneers.

Sixteen years ago, I passed over the [Wilmington and Weldon Railroad] and as I heard the carping, captious remarks of travelers from the sunny South and frozen North, I blushed, and dared not vindicate our State fame, so great were the odds against her. [Recently] in passing over the same route, my State pride was exalted in listening to encomiums on the style of buildings, and crops of grain and fruits and grass that met the eye, as the Steam horse sped along its iron track.”

—B from Baltimore, in the Fayetteville Observer, September 1856

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THJH, Fall 2010
other areas. These important events helped define this distinctive era.

Think about other ways of telling the story of the antebellum years. The North Carolina landscape of that time did not look the same as our landscape in 2010, and Tar Heels’ responses to some of the questions you just answered would be very different. Consider heading out of your classroom to explore important surviving elements of antebellum days. Together, the articles in this magazine open a window on diverse experiences in an era of important economic and social change. How can we combine information gained from buildings and landscapes with what we discover from other historical sources, like documents, to learn about people’s lives?

The 1880s got off to a slow start in the state. Faced with exhausted farmland, poor transportation and education, and other challenges to opportunity, thousands of Tar Heels simply left. But North Carolina experienced a building boom in the 1840s and 1850s that began to make it a very different place. Construction of railroads and turnpikes, industrialization, and expansion of commercial agriculture contributed to this boom, which remade the state in highly visible ways. According to North Carolina architectural historian Catherine Bisher, “This was a period of such effective and widespread rebuilding that from these years, as from none before, buildings have endured by the hundreds to the present day.” The boom improved and expanded existing buildings and produced new kinds of structures, too. County seats constructed grand new courthouses to fit expanding government services, and growing religious groups needed new churches, too. For some wealthy Tar Heels, larger homes with dining rooms and parlors—in popular new design styles such as Greek Revival or Italianate—replaced one- or two-room log houses.

Pay particular attention to the ways that buildings themselves provide evidence of everyday experience that may not be clear from documentary (or written) sources alone. For example, according to the 1860 United States census, 80-year-old Rebecca Everett lived with a young woman, the woman’s two-year-old son, and 12 enslaved people at a family farm in Edgecombe County. Today you can tour the small three-room house where Rebecca and other members of her household lived, worked, and interacted. If you consider evidence from the census in combination with architectural evidence from the house, does it change your thinking? What does family life in a three-room house suggest about opportunities for privacy? We might ask some of these same questions about the enslaved residents of Stagville, a site in modern-day Durham County where four two-story slave quarters survive. How were such small dwellings used by the many enslaved African Americans who worked on the plantation as farm laborers, carpenters, weavers, blacksmiths, cooks, or gardeners?

Where people lived in the antebellum era also influenced their everyday lives in important ways. Consider how slave housing at Stagville and at the Bellamy Mansion in Wilmington documents various kinds of tenures and tenancy on large plantations. How might life as an enslaved worker on a large plantation compare to such a person’s life in a city? Location mattered in other ways. Most North Carolinians were involved in farming, and region influenced the type of crops grown on a farm—cotton, bright-leaf tobacco, corn, and wheat, to name a few. Prosperity on the farm affected prosperity of the surrounding community. Thomas Day’s cabinetmaking business boomed with the growth of commercial tobacco farming in the Caswell County area. In 1853 Day—a free man of color—participated in the Industrial Revolution just starting to take hold in the state. He bought a steam-powered engine to increase his busy shop’s production. Wealthier families’ homes, like the Bellamy Mansion, can reflect changes in technology during the 1880s, too. Articles in this magazine also suggest some of the ways that children received an education in the antebellum years—learning a trade as an apprentice, learning farming or domestic skills from a parent, or attending a new school like the Burwell School. Girls and boys often received different kinds of training for the distinctive kinds of roles society expected them to play as adults.

Keep in mind that not everything built during the antebellum period has survived. In many cases, the buildings that remain represent the best, most stylish, or sturdiest examples of the building boom. Small (or yeoman) farmers—those who owned at least 100 acres of land and a few or no enslaved workers—vastly outnumbered richer plantation owners in North Carolina. Far less evidence of yeoman life exists, however. In some cases, only parts of an antebellum landscape survive. On a large farm site, perhaps the main house remains, while the barn, corncrib, loom house, and slave dwellings have disappeared. Some sites have undergone a lot of reconstruction or restoration, while others remain largely as they were over 150 years ago.

And some aspects of antebellum material life can be studied mainly through archaeology. Thus, you will not find a complete overview of the era in this issue of Tar Heel Junior Historian.

There are many more buildings and landscapes we might have included. As historian Bisher noted, hundreds of antebellum sites survive. Try to visit and study one in your own community. How does it fit the history of the 1800s presented in your textbook? Can you apply what you learned from your book to understand the site and the society that built it? Once you have explored historic sites described in this magazine or located in your area, try rewriting your textbook’s chapter on the antebellum era. What new information would you include? What else would you like to know? Considering a wide range of sources can help you learn to recognize and appreciate the evidence of the past that exists all around you.

History in “Site”

Looking at the Web site for Somerset Place State Historic Site in Crouseville (www.schoolesthoresites.org/ somerset), you will see a list of structures located at Somerset. The list includes the Joseph Collins III family home, the enclosed community kitchen complex, the overseer’s house, the salting house, the smokehouse, and the transportation rail. Right away, a plan of the site and a photo of the Web site show that the antebellum landscape of Somerset was quite different from that of a modern farm.

Here are the kinds of questions that might get you thinking about a site in your county:

*What is the site located where it is?* Does the physical place reflect “place” in society?* How might it be (or is) part of a larger site?* What do the buildings tell you about the people who used it, from their economics to their daily lives?* Does the site suggest something about social class, race, or gender during the era?* Does the site tell you anything about food preparation, transportation, settlement patterns, family life, culture, religion, politics, education, industry, technology, or recreation?* How do any of the answers to these questions compare and contrast to your own experiences?

Each article in this issue of Tar Heel Junior Historian includes a sample from a primary source document that relates to the antebellum place being discussed. Look for the green box with the Greek column symbol! What primary sources might relate to sites in your community?
Uniquely Somerset: LIVE!

On February 5, 2020, we explored the rich and complex stories of the people and spaces that make up Somerset Place, one of the largest plantations in North Carolina’s antebellum history.

Discover who and what made Somerset Place exceptional and how we know about this site’s unique history and the people—enslaved and free—who lived here.

Watch at: https://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org/uniquely-somerset-live
THE SLAVE COMMUNITY AT SOMERSET PLACE

By Dorothy Spruill Redford

From Tar Heel Junior Historian 35:1 (Fall 1995)

The beginning of the African American community at Somerset Place is closely entangled in both the land and early labor needs of three business partners. In 1785 these men purchased more than one hundred thousand acres of densely vegetated swampland “surrounding and bordering upon” Lake Phelps (mostly in present-day Washington County) with the plan of developing a profitable plantation. The partners soon found that turning their swampland into fields that could be farmed had some obstacles.

First, the land had to be cleared: thousands of huge trees that were hundreds of years old had to be cut down and uprooted.

Second, since the land was too waterlogged for passable roadways, a six-mile-long, twenty-foot-wide, six-to-twelve-foot-deep canal had to be dug. This large canal was primarily to allow boats to reach the plantation site from the Scuppernong River, which connected to Albemarle Sound and the ocean. But the canal also provided drainage and irrigation to some areas. Much of the dirt from the canal was piled alongside it to provide higher ground for improved roadways.

Third, to help drain hundreds of acres of stagnant water, miles upon miles of smaller cross-ditches had to be dug.

All this work had to be done before crops could be planted and harvested—before the plantation could make a profit. And it all had to be done by hand. Workers had to be found quickly. At the time, the ready solution to cheap labor was slavery. All plantations relied on enslaved individuals to build and run them. Somerset Place would be no different.

THEY WERE WORKERS WITH SKILLS

Labor needs dictated the number, age, gender, and skills of the first workers: 167 enslaved men, women, and children. Mainly, they were young, strong men in their late teens to early twenties. Some young women worked beside these men in planting and harvesting the fields, but uprooting tree stumps and hauling mud away from the ditches were seen as “men’s work.”

This initial labor force came from three basic sources. Almost half, including a man named Guinea Jack and his wife named Fanny, a man named Quammy, and 77 others, were brought to the plantation site directly from their homeland in West Africa. Others included 49 people from neighboring counties and states, women like Suckey and Rose who cooked and washed. The remaining men and women were artisans who were already in Edenton: a carpenter named
Lewis, a brickmason named Joe Welcome, and others who were joiners, cobblers, millers, and weavers.

Only 113 of those 167 survived to be counted in the 1790 census, but within those few years, the swampland was transformed into a prosperous plantation.

**They were individuals with traditions**

Each man, woman, and child who was brought to the plantation had a special identity and traditions that could be passed to future generations.

Guinea Jack, Quammy, and the other native Africans brought special “day names” indicating the day they were born: Quammy meant “born on Saturday” and Kofi, or Cuff, meant “born on Friday.” Each person also carried a special family last name chosen by the father and bestowed on the child during a special naming ceremony that was attended by the whole village eight days after birth. These special African last names were lost as the native Africans were forced to adopt the last name of their first owner—Guinea Jack and Quammy became Collinses.

Fanny brought her love of African foods like rice, black-eyed peas, watermelon, okra, yams, and cucumbers. Fortunately these foods had been brought to America on slave ships long before she arrived.

Quammy made musical instruments, bowls, and dippers from gourds that grew from seeds brought from Africa. He also adapted and used gourds that were native to America.

Guinea Jack likely brought spiritual beliefs that worshiped elements of the universe that humankind could not have created—elements like the sun. He also may have had “healing hands,” or skills that could heal the sick. In addition he used the practice of “May Rain,” or collecting the first rain that falls in May to wash eyes and prevent allergies.

In time these traditions mixed, and what had been purely African became a part of African American traditions. For example, some slave descendants still use May Rain. Carpenters, joiners, and masons who had built the fourteen-room house where Josiah III lived, thirty-seven houses in the enslaved community, and the plantation’s barns and mills passed their skills on to their sons. Cooks, spinners, weavers, laundresses, and housemaids passed all they knew to their daughters. Plowmen and field hands passed on their knowledge about working the land.

**They were people with fears but hopes**

Although none in the slave community at Somerset Place were there voluntarily or for pay, most did not try to leave. Laws before 1808 allowed Americans to import Africans and hold them as slaves on plantations like Somerset Place. Overseers supervised the enslaved and deterred them from running away. In addition, each county had teams of “patrollers” to catch any slaves who attempted to escape. If slaves tried to escape, the law required that “finders” return that property to its owner. Owners could give out punishments that ranged from flogging to stocking to selling the runaways.
Knowing what could happen, most slaves, especially mothers afraid of being sold away from their children, decided to remain. Besides, most who tried to escape seemed to get caught.

One slave named Smart ran and was caught, taken to the West Indies, and sold. Becky Drew ran, too. When captured, she was put in the stocks overnight. The weather turned bitterly cold and her feet froze. Both legs had to be amputated.

Some slaves did not run but committed other acts of defiance and were severely punished, too. In 1853, field-workers led by Peter and Elsy Littlejohn tried to poison the overseer at Somerset Place. Sixteen were taken to the Deep South by a slave trader and sold. Most slaves simply stayed and focused on preparing their children for the freedom they prayed would come.

When the Civil War finally ended slavery in 1865, these African American men and women had to leave behind every tangible thing they had created. But they took into freedom their families and the knowledge their family elders had passed on. For them freedom did not just mean starting over, it meant starting afresh.

_Dorothy Spruill Redford is a descendant of Somerset Place and author of the book, *Somerset Homecoming: Recovering a Lost Heritage*. She is currently site manager at Somerset Place State Historic Site near Creswell, Washing County._
**The Slave Community at Somerset Place**

**Discussion Questions**

1. Describe where Somerset is located, its size, and the number of people who lived there.

2. What was the workday like for enslaved people at Somerset Place? How long was a workday? When did enslaved people have time off from their work?

3. Describe some of the work performed by enslaved people at Somerset Place. Does the work sound difficult? Does it sound time consuming? What would be necessary to perform some of the tasks? Does the work done by women and/or children surprise you? Why, or why not?

4. What work was done by the owners? How did they spend their time?
5. How did the status of Charlotte Cabarrus differ from the status of enslaved people at the plantation? Did her role surprise you? Why, or why not?

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6. Why would the Collins family want to keep the plantation's enslaved people away from Federal forces during the Civil War? What happened to these people after the war ended?

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mancala is a very old game played in many parts of Africa, and was brought by Africans to the U.S. Stone game boards have been found in ancient Egyptian temples! It has many names; in Ghana, where it is the national game, it is called Oware. Have you heard of other names?

**make your own board**

**supplies** egg carton, scissors, tape, markers or paint, 48 stones or beans

1. Cut the lid off the egg carton.

2. Cut about two inches off each end of the lid.

3. Tape the lid ends to the short sides of the egg carton to form two mancala bins.

Decorate your mancala board with the markers or paint. Start playing!

**one way to play**

1. Each player sits on one long side of the board. The 6 holes in front of each player are hers. The larger end holes are the mancalas—one for each player. Put 4 stones in each of the 12 center holes.

2. Player A picks up all of the stones in one hole on her side of the board. Moving counterclockwise (to her right), she puts one stone in each hole. If the last stone lands in her own mancala, she gets a second turn (Players do **not** drop stones into their opponent's mancala).

3. Player B then takes a turn. If a player's last stone lands in an empty hole on his side of the game board, he collects all of his opponent's stones in the opposite hole, as well as the single stone in his own. He puts these stones in his mancala. The players keep taking turns.

A player can’t touch the stones in a hole to count them before taking a turn. Once a player touches the stones, she must play them.

4. The game ends when all six of one player’s holes are empty. The other player places all the remaining stones from his holes into his mancala (the player who ends the game does not always win!). The players count the stones in their mancalas. The player with more stones wins the game.
1860s

A “day dress” like this might be worn by a wealthy woman to go visiting. It is supported by a bell-shaped cage of hoops instead of lots of petticoats, making it a little bit cooler than earlier dresses.
1860s

A work dress was not as wide or as long as a dress-up dress, and didn’t have hoops under it. This made it easier to move around in. A kerchief helped this woman keep her hair clean.
1860s

A farmer often took his coat off while working. This man is carrying a scythe, a very sharp tool used to cut wheat and other grains.
1860s

Work clothes sometimes included a coat like this. Many men used a kerchief to wipe their faces as well as to wear around their necks.
1860s

This blouse was called a “Garibaldi shirtwaist.” A popular style named after the Italian patriot Giuseppe Garibaldi, it was the direct ancestor of the modern women’s blouse.