Josiah Collins III, Antebellum Corn Planter in North Carolina: An Examination of His Plantation Enterprise

By Tsutomi NumaoKA

We historians have occasionally been apt to overlook the fact that in the pre-Civil War South, corn surpassed “king” cotton in acreage cultivated and in value as well as in weight. In 1849, for example, the South had approximately 18,000,000 acres in corn as opposed to 5,000,000 acres in cotton. Over one-half the acreage devoted to farming in the South was planted in corn. The value of the southern corn crop was valued at $209,000,000 in 1855, while cotton was $136,000,000 the same year.12 Corn was indispensable to almost all Southerners, black and white, rich and poor, small farmers and large planters. Even on cotton plantations most of the field hands were “at least familiar with the routine of corn cultivation.”13 Corn was an important subsistence crop, and could be regarded as the staff of life for Southerners.

Too much emphasis upon the subsistence corn crop, however, may have lent to the underestimation of its role as a cash crop in the antebellum South. The history of the Upper South undeniably tells us that eastern Virginia, Missouri and the basins of Kentucky and Tennessee continued to ship corn mainly to the plantation regions of the Deep South. However, the relative importance of these areas in corn shipping to other states, North and South, had been gradually declining after 1840, in the face of the rapid growth of market-oriented production of corn in the Old Northwest, which was encouraged by transportation innovations that followed an east-west axis.14

This is also the case in North Carolina. Since the beginning of settlements in North Carolina, subsistence agriculture, rather than commercial agriculture, was more pervasive. Even in the antebellum period, the production of commercial crops of the state as a whole was relatively less important than that of other typical southern states producing cash crops. Thus, consequently, historians have paid relatively little attention to the commercial production of corn in North Carolina. According to the writings of Cornelius O. Cathey, a historian of agriculture in North Carolina, the state was situated “along the southern fringe of the tobacco belt,” and “along the northern fringe of the belt in which cotton, rice, and indigo were produced.”15 But, of course, this does not mean that commercial corn crop farming in North Carolina was a trivial affair. Yet, even
despite these developmental trends and acknowledged impressions pertinent to North Carolina’s agriculture, there certainly were planters along the Roanoke River and Albemarle Sound in antebellum eastern North Carolina (see Figure 1) who produced corn and shipped significantly large amounts of it to east-coastal markets, not only in the North, but also in the South. Josiah Collins III (1808–1863) of Washington County was one of the most prominent of these.

The purpose of this paper is to elucidate, from the economic point of view, what kind of plantation management was necessary for Josiah III to continue to prosper as a commercially producing corn planter in antebellum North Carolina. And, in so doing this paper will also make salient North Carolina’s northeastern coastal plain’s veritable historical role as a corn shipping region in the history of slavery in the antebellum South. The socioeconomic, sociopolitical and religious investigations will also be required for a full comprehension of Josiah III’s plantation management as a whole, but here the economic aspect only will be discussed.

The Foundation of the “Somerset Place” Plantation

In early January 1830, after completion of his education at Harvard and a Connecticut law school, Josiah Collins III, age twenty one, arrived at Somerset with his bride, a very amiable society woman from Newark, New Jersey. Though young, he was the plantation owner of 3,000 acres of land and the master of at least 229 slaves. The foundation of this plantation, however, was owed much to his father and his grandfather. Establishing the basis for the future plantation, Josiah I (1735–1819), a merchant, politician, manufacturer, and land speculator, was instrumental in the seminal preparation of the land for crop cultivation.

Josiah I was an emigrant from England to Boston in 1773. In 1777, during the Revolution, he moved to the area of his success, the port of Edenton. With the aim of land speculation, Josiah I and two other investors, Nathaniel Allen and Samuel Dickinson of Edenton, entered into a verbal agreement in 1784 and formed the Lake Company in about 1785. They quickly started purchasing “cypress and gum swamp” adjoining Lake Phelps (see Figure 1). Also during this time, Collins traveled to Boston in order to prepare two brigs to sail to Africa whose purpose it was to bring back slaves.

Soon after the Revolution, there was a burst of enthusiasm for improving river channels in the eastern lowlands of North Carolina. The state government enacted bills and appointed commissioners to do the work. George Washington also recognized the importance of improving river channels in North Carolina and he envisioned a canal that would connect “landlocked Albemarle district to the port of Norfolk” running through the Great Dismal Swamp. In the 1780s,
enterprising businessmen, like Collins, directed their attention to the speculating potentials of the immense swamp lands spreading vastly behind the coast. The lands required draining to remove surface water, but once having been sufficiently drained, they would turn into remarkably fertile lands consisting of black loam, muck or peat. They had great potential for heavy crops. This is the reason why Collins and his partners promptly attempted to aquire land and laborers ahead of the others.\(^{(9)}\)

On June 1, 1786, the first of Collins’ brigs, the *Jennett*, arrived at the port of Edenton with a load of eighty slaves. Nine days later, the eighty ton brig *Camden*, Collins’ second brig, under Captain Richard S. Grinald, also arrived at Edenton with the same number of African slaves valued at £2844.8.10 and taxed at £56.17.6.\(^{(10)}\) These one hundred and sixty African slaves comprised the first labor force to devote their lives to developing the swamp land around Lake Phelps, the future Somerset Place Plantation. Their first task was to dig a canal from Lake Phelps to the Scuppernong River (see Figure 1).

The work of digging a six plus mile long canal through the swamp was an immense task. Even though the newly arrived Africans were young men and women, age twenty to twenty five, and looked healthy and strong, they soon succumbed to overwork. When they were seriously injured or disabled, they would be “left by the bank of the canal, and the next morning the returning gang would find the dead.”\(^{(11)}\) Surrounded by stagnant water and unstimulated hot air in the swamp, the slaves also had to struggle against swarms of malaria-bearing mosquitoes. Even more than half a century later, Harriet Jacobs who ran away and hid herself in Snaky Swamp, not far from Lake Phelps, was horrified by the “hundreds of mosquitoes” which “had so poisoned [her] flesh” within an hour.\(^{(12)}\)

The canal was finally completed in 1788 at the cost of many African lives. It was magnificent in appearance, but more than that, it was extremely practical. By 1794 Collins and his partners had erected “two excellent Sawmills” on the canal for the production of cypress plank and scantling, and built “a Rice machine and a Grist Mill” for thrashing rice and wheat.\(^{(13)}\) Though rice and wheat were later replaced by corn as the primary crop of Somerset, the large canal and the mechanization of production systems would both be the soul of the enterprise of Collins plantation for the next three quarters of a century, spanning three generations.\(^{(14)}\)

After a great controversy over sharing the company’s expenses equally among the three partners, Josiah I bought out the interests of his partners by 1816. The next year, he named the plantation on the Lake “Somerset Place” after Somersetshire, England where he was born. Two years later, when he died, his son, Josiah II, took over the management of the plantation.

Josiah II (1763–1839), a merchant and manufacturer, continued the business
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Manifest of the Vessels Arriving at Port Roanoke, June 2 to June 20, 1786.

On June 10, 1786, the 80 ton brig *Camden*, under Captain Richard S. Grinall, arrived at the Port with 80 African Negroes valued at £2844.8.10 and taxed at £56.17.6. (From the Account of Importations, 1784–1787, Port Roanoke, Ports, Treasurer's and Comptroller's Papers, vol. 33, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh)
successfully. They also worked, in his own way, as a planter. He continued to purchase slaves to supplement the decreasing labor force, and tried to keep some kinds of "useful & ingenious machinery" his father left efficiently operating. Like his father, Josiah II did not live at Somerset, but built a small house for his business trips to the lake, showing his zeal over the management of Somerset Place Plantation. Because he spent more time at Somerset than his father, Collins developed a close relationship with his neighbors, the Pettigrews, with whom he traded goods, had accounts and hired out slaves. He stayed on the lake most of the year in 1828, increasing the number of slaves and houses so that his son could start out life as a planter without any difficulty. Thus, when Josiah Collins III arrived at Somerset Place Plantation in 1830, the preliminary arrangements had already been made for the commercial production of corn and wheat on the plantation. The only task left to him was in seeking a way to enlarge the plantation through efficient management.

The Progressive Farming of Corn

Edmund Ruffin, a preeminent agricultural reformer in the antebellum South and publisher of the agricultural journal, the Farmers' Register (1833–1842), visited Somerset Place Plantation in both 1839, and again in 1857, to observe the conditions of reclamation and drainage, and the cultivation of the land. His observations open a window for understanding Josiah III's fixed policy for managing the plantation from 1830 until 1861. This policy allowed him to operate a highly-efficient working system and to seek, under that system, the maximum profit in crop production.

At Somerset Place in 1839, a decade after Josiah III started managing the plantation, the drainage system, by a complicated network of a canal, drains, ditches, and tap ditches, made possible the cultivation of the farm of "1400 acres." Its smooth operation was a primary consideration of his plantation, as it had been for Josiah I and II, because the soil around Lake Phelps was indeed fertile, but had to be drained before planting crops of any kind.

To maintain the system in good order, the cleaning, clearing, raking, digging, and cutting the furrows and/or ditches required, was a task assigned to his field hands, men and women, for the slack season. Collins' "Plantation Record, January 1850—July 1853" is replete with anecdotes of such slaves' labor, as, for examples: "4 men cleaning out tap ditches … Rest of women clearing out 3 ft[,] ditches, piling up trash in furrows & commenced raking out furrows," "Men with spades[,] women with hoes digging tap ditches from Western Canal to Mockardon[,] in fields G & H," "Hands deepening 3 ft[,] ditches at Western [field]," "Men Cutting 3 ft[,] ditches in Billet field." According to Ruffin's observations, the "water-furrows" in the fields collected all surface or rain
water, discharging it into the “shallow tap ditches,” then emptying into the “deep 3 feet ditches” running down the slope of the farmland, then into the “6 feet leading ditches” intersected at right angles by the 3 feet ditches, and next into the “8 feet main drains,” which were perpendicular to the 6 leading ditches, and finally into the “canal” running parallel with the main drains. The labor was certainly arduous and wearying, necessitating perseverance from his slaves, albeit they did this with considerable success, so that the whole operation of the drainage seemed “very perfect” in Ruffin’s eyes.

The soil carefully preserved by such a drainage system was exquisitely described “as rich as the banks of the Nile” by Willie P. Mangum, a lawyer and U.S. senator from North Carolina in the 1830s. It continued to be an essential prerequisite to the high productivity of the land for corn crop at Somerset Place. The normal yield of corn for Collins was between thirty-five and fifty bushels per acre, though the average yield in North Carolina was approximated at somewhere between fifteen and twenty. On occasion, he produced up to “around sixty bushels” to the acre. Incidentally, good planters in the Lower South counted on “25 to 30 bushels.”

When Ruffin visited Somerset Place in 1839, Collins’ highly mechanized production system was operating smoothly. Ruffin, in the Farmers’ Register, described it after his visit. His article included this passage about Collins’ effective use of water and machinery:

The extensive use made of water to save labor on this estate, is one of the most interesting subjects for observation. It has been already stated that the descent of the canal gives a head of 6 feet of water at the mills, at the distance of a quarter of a mile from the lake. Part of this power works a saw mill, and a corn and wheat mill of two pair of stones, with the bolting, and other machinery, &c., proper for the making of flour. Also the corn is shelled and fanned, and, though not now, formerly the wheat was thrashed, and cleaned by the water-power conducted to the barn and one of the great corn houses. Besides these more important operations, and for some of which there is daily use made of the water-power, it is also directed to crushing and grinding corn in the ear or horses and other stock, the working a circular saw, turning grindstones, and may be substituted for hand labor in various other ways. When it is desired to prepare a cargo of corn for the Charleston market, there is no need of commencing until notice has been received of the vessel having arrived in the river below. The shelling of the corn is then commenced, by a shelling machine of immense power, then fanned, next lifted up by elevating machinery, from the first to the fourth story of the house, there measured, and then emptied through a spout into a large flat boat lying in the canal, which, as soon as loaded in bulk, is conveyed along the canal to the vessel. Thus the risk of keeping a large quantity of shelled corn in bulk is avoided, and, by the aid of water, all the operations necessary to load a vessel may be completed in a very short time.

Imposingly on the canal bank stood a sawmill, a gristmill, and three large granaries. In these facilities, there were a great variety of useful, ingenious and labor-saving machines and implements, many of which were water-powered, such as a corn sheller; a corn fanning machine; a
corn crusher; a corn grinding machine; a wheat grinding machine; a rice machine; a circular saw; grindstones; elevating machinery.\(^{(27)}\)

Still attracting more attention was a marvelously streamlined working series with the help of water power and machinery. Thanks to a network of the drainage system, the field hands could harvest corn into flatboats, which were able to operate very near each field. Then, by a kind of floodgate system, the very heavy corn gathered in the fields was brought to the large granaries in flatboats with minimal labor, and subsequently lifted from the boats by water power into the granaries for storage. Two of the granaries were for corn only. One was a three story structure, 100 feet by 60, and the other 80 feet square with four floors. Both were huge and built with extreme care and strength to be able to hold the weight of its contents.\(^{(28)}\) When exported to markets, the fixed amount of corn was very expeditiously shelled by mechanical shelling equipment, then mechanically fanned, and lifted from the first to the fourth floor and then poured through spouts into barges carrying it down the canal to vessels bound for markets waiting at the mouth of the Scuppernong River. Due to the water power generated from such machinery, the risk of spoiling a large quantity of shelled corn by long term housing, as well as that of shipping the bulky and worthless cobs at higher costs of transportation could be avoided.

Thus, for Collins, to say nothing of its effective labor use, the streamlined corn carrying water transportation system held the keys to the success of his plantation enterprise. In the Albemarle Sound region, where about twenty rivers ran north and south into the sound, almost every planter was anxious to operate his plantation as near as possible to navigable water.\(^{(29)}\) It is not at all fortuitous that the successful commercial corn planters in the antebellum northeastern coastal plain—for example, Stephen A. Norfleet and Lewis Thompson, Bertie County; Thomas P. Burgwyn and Henry K. Burgwyn, Northampton County; Ebenezer Pettigrew and Charles Pettigrew, Tyrrell County; Josiah Collins, Washington County; Tristrim Lowther Skinner, owning several plantations in Bertie, Perquimans and Chowan Counties—each had an excellent system of crop carrying waterways for east-coastal markets. The Burgwyns, for instance, took possession of their estate on the Roanoke River in 1840, and though in close proximity to the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad, the Roanoke River provided access to “the cheapest and best water routes to Norfolk, Charleston, and New York.” \(^{(30)}\)

More surprisingly, Collins’ plantation management techniques only improved after Ruffin’s visit. This was closely related to the revival of the agricultural reform movement in North Carolina, which was expanded with increased vigor from about 1845 onward.\(^{(31)}\) Almost as aggressive as any in the state, Collins responded to this trend. What he focused a great deal of attention on were the subjects of (1) technological improvements and (2) soil fertility.
First, as can be easily deduced from the above, Collins tried to respond quickly to the technological improvements which would ease the slaves’ labors while also improving production and profits. A commercial correspondence in 1859 to one of his commission merchants, Hardy & Brothers, in Norfolk, from whom Collins chiefly ordered his farming equipment, reveals his enterprising attitude toward his supply of improved farming implements. He wrote that: “From what I learn of the Plows, one dozen will not come amiss. My first order simply had reference to an experiment, but as my son has seen the Plow worked and likes it very much, I am rather glad … that you have purchased a dozen.”32 After that experiment, the hoe, which had been used principally in the cultivation of the crop, became secondary to the new modeled plow and the cultivator towards the end of the antebellum period, and Collins began to use plows without hesitation.

A variety of new or improved agricultural machines, implements and machine parts were purchased after the mid-1840s. Some examples of them are: “Lime Spreader & Leather Band $47.50” in 1844; “Reaping Machine $100.00” in 1847; “Reaper $159.25” in 1848; “India Rubber band for Thrasher $18.70” in 1848; “Castings fr [for] Reaper $31.55” in 1851; “Wheat Thrasher & Horse Power $262.00” in 1854; “Castings fr Sawmill $34.96” in 1855; “Castings fr Wheat Cutter $77.98” in 1855; “Wheat Cutters $320.45” in 1856; “Wheat Harvesters $462.92” in 1857;33

These examples cause us to think that Collins purchased farm machines and implements mainly for the production of wheat, not corn. The same holds true for the greater part of the commercial corn planters not only in eastern North Carolina, but probably in the whole of the South.34 Ostensibly, the tardiness of inventing machines and implements for corn planting could be posited as a reason for this, and still a question of the growing property of corn crop was at the root of the technological backwardness.

Corn crops were, in general, could be adapted to almost every kind of soil, and moderate quantities of harvest could be expected even by terribly slipshod and careless practices. Compared to cotton, corn needed less continual care. Intensive labor was needed only at planting and during the short harvest. According to 1840 statistics, for example, only 69 slave labor-hours, as opposed to 135 hours for cotton, were required to grow and harvest an acre of corn (see Table 1).35 It was also a fact that, with the exception of some of the hard work of plowing, slave women and children could engage by hand in almost every phase of corn cultivation in the same way as slave men did. Frequent references to corn labor habitually performed by female slaves and children are found in Collins’ Plantation Record. Some examples are as follows: “Children with some women pulling up corn stalks in Gallow field,” “2 girls hoeing corn in Upper & Lower Rice fields,” “3 women weeding corn in Lower Rice field,” “Balance of women … carrying corn in Machine House loft & hauling corn from Upper Rice field 4 women gathering corn in same field,” “Balance of men with
women gathering corn in field F.” These circumstances caused the planters to feel that it was not as necessary when cultivating corn to use labor-saving, large machines and implements, like cutters, reapers and planters.

At Somerset Place, after all, technological improvements for corn planting, compared to wheat, were really lagging. It was not until around 1861 that Collins used one or two mechanical corn planters. But, even in corn fields in the spring, Collins availed himself of the help of improved or labor-saving machines, indirectly for use with the corn crop. In Billet field, allotted for one of his corn fields in 1850, for example, a corn planting work series, such as harrowing the ground, dropping the corn seeds, and covering the soil, was performed after spreading lime with lime machines, like: “4 Harrows[,] 3 droppers[,] 1 coverer & Lime Machine … 2 men hauling lime[,] 2 men & 6 women tending & feeding [Lime] Machine,” “Lime Machine … 4 men harrowing in the lime—1 double furrow plough, 3 droppers & 1 coverer going” on April 23 and 24, respectively. Additionally, the work of carrying heavy manure to corn fields was fulfilled by using carts and flatboats: “6 carts hauling manure to flats & from flats to field—”. Thus, Collins, although unable to use corn planting machines themselves, put into practice the strategy of technological improvements to the utmost. The use of better machines and implements undoubtedly formed an integral part of Collins’ management policy.

Collins even took advantage of the great use of labor-saving machines in manipulating the slaves’ labor for their own benefit. He allowed his slaves to use mechanical reapers, threshing machines and wagons in harvesting their own crops in their “Negro Patch,” a common field comprising 55 acres, not family-unit gardens. Therefore, the field hands could, for example, use machines and wagons to cut and haul wheat (the scheduled crop in 1850) (see Table 2), even in the Negro Patch during harvest. According to his Plantation Record, two slaves, probably women, worked “Machines [in] Cutting Wheat in Negro Patch” till 12 o’clock on June 19 in 1850. A week later, “6 Waggons” were used in “haling wheat from Negro Patch (see Table 3).” It is clear that Collins skillfully dealt with the Negro Patch from his sharp entrepreneurial and profit-oriented mind. By using machines and wagons, slaves could harvest their own wheat efficiently without hard labor. The majority of them must have accepted this policy with pleasure. But from Collins’ viewpoint, it ensued from his wide-ranging system of positive incentives and rewards for working them hard. As Uriah Bennett, an ex-field hand on Somerset Plantation, testified, Collins certainly knew well that “slaves hated compelling power.” Permitting the slaves themselves to maintain the Negro Patch, and to use the machines and wagons in it, was in accordance with his policy. Collins tried to get his slaves used to working the machines, and using the wagons and other improved implements in the Negro Patch, just like in other plantation fields, instilling the
Record of Slaves' Daily Labor From October 29 to November 1, 1850.
It shows that slaves did a variety of tasks such as: cleaning out ditches, raking furrows, gathering corn, carrying corn to the vessel, pulling up corn stalks, sowing wheat, hauling lime, spreading lime with the lime machine, putting hogs in boxes, and so forth. (From Plantation Record from January 1850 to July 1853, Josiah Collins Papers, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh)
motivation to work hard amongst the slaves, which would indirectly benefit his own commercial production of corn and wheat.

Second, Collins’ other strenuous efforts to improve the plantation management techniques can be recognized in his close attention to the problem of soil fertility. Throughout the period of his plantation management from 1830 to 1861, especially from 1845 to 1861, the application of various kinds of manure and fertilizers to enrich the soil had always been one of the principal concerns for Collins.\[43\]

A “generous use of manures” in planting was a basic characterization of Collins’ farming. This idea was probably borrowed from John Taylor of Virginia and George W. Jeffreys of North Carolina, the representative agricultural reformers in the early nineteenth century.\[44\] Collins had not altered this method before, and after around 1839, the crucial time when he took a drastic step to replace rice and wheat with corn, his major crop from then on. The land near the lake was especially fertile and productive in wheat, a part of which produced as much as “37 bushels” to the acre.\[45\] In spite of such soil fertility and, moreover, a generally semi-established method of cultivation with very little use, if any, of manure, Collins, nonetheless, “manured heavily” when sowing wheat in the field before 1839.\[46\] Subsequently, corn continued to be the main crop at Somerset until 1861, with no change in policy.

Some of Josiah Collins III’s papers abound with references to purchasing or using the different kinds of manure and fertilizers, such as lime, peas, guano, clover, and other “green” manures. Outstanding among these was lime. From 1845 to 1850, according to the records, a relatively huge amount of money was appropriated for the purchase of lime, including “shell lime” and “oyster shells”: $717.00 in 1845; $1,116.84 in 1846; $1,376.00 in 1847; $1,458.74 in 1848; $620.00 in 1849; and $942.00 in 1850.\[47\] By investing such a large amount of money in lime, indeed, more than the amount spent on machines and implements, Collins tried to restore elements to the soil which are now known to be indispensable to plant growth. Despite a clear tendency to decrease the purchase of lime after 1850, Collins’ intrepid way of applying lime in the fifties surprised even agronomist Edmund Ruffin. Ruffin observed in 1857, when revisiting Somerset Place, that “Mr. Collins has limed about seven hundred acres—and in some cases, for experiment, has put as much as three hundred bushels to the acre; and in every application has found certain and speedy benefit and profit.” Ruffin, it seems, considered Collins’ liberal use of lime an over-kill.\[48\]

The “green” manures, especially peas, were also used often in restoring soil fertility. Not yet knowledgeable in the most apt use of peas as manure until 1839, because his peas were gathered with his corn and “nothing [was] given to the land as manure,”\[49\] Collins gradually gave more attention to peas as a soil-builder. In 1846, for example, he bought “234 Bushls [sic] Peas for
Manure to Wheat” for $129.58.\textsuperscript{(50)} By 1850, Collins had planted peas as a soil-building crop in rotation schemes (see Table 2), though they were not fully practiced. Some of the peas were still picked up as food by man and livestock along the corn and wheat rows.\textsuperscript{(51)}

Collins, though not as regular and large as Stephen Norfleet, also used guano as a fertilizer. It was not until after 1850 that the use of guano became widespread in North Carolina. Collins seems to have begun purchasing guano experimentally around 1844, but he purchased it mostly in the 1850s, particularly for use on turnips.\textsuperscript{(52)}

Besides these fertilizers, the “farm-made putrescent manure” was also sometimes applied, and even weeds were turned into manure.\textsuperscript{(53)} When making manure from weeds, he very carefully covered “all the rank growth of weeds” standing “7 to 8 feet high” in the soil manure for the production of corn the next year.\textsuperscript{(54)} Thus, Collins tried to enrich the soil positively and perseveringly with the application of the various kinds of manure and fertilizers used liberally and with variety.

Collins’ interest in soil fertility also led him to try a scientific farming approach, that is, crop rotation. Crop rotation in North Carolina, unlike the practice in Virginia, was not so common in the antebellum period. However, around 1839, Collins found that planting corn in the same field for many years was harmful to the crop. So, he started cultivating corn “for three years in succession” and then he let the land “lie out of tillage three years, and be grazed in the middle one of these three years.”\textsuperscript{(55)} Table 2 shows that, with the single exception of field F, he continued to grow corn in three year intervals into the early 1850s. Only in field F was corn planted four years in succession. We find that even in this case, however, Collins planted peas as fertilizer in the fourth year together with corn.

However, it is evident that, in the 1840s and 1850s, he actively tried a long series of deliberate experiments on the wise use of the fallow ground after three years’ cultivation for corn. For example, as table 2 shows, Collins planted wheat crop on some expected fallow fields, such as field B, C, D and E. This is a sure indicator of his examining of whether or not he needed as much of a break between crops as he had practiced, and that, besides, in case of wheat, little manure was needed.\textsuperscript{(56)}

At that time, opinions differed from farmer to farmer as to the best method of raising corn, while, at the same time, they came closer to agreement on the best way to grow wheat. The ease with which corn crop could be raised, conversely, made it difficult for farmers to investigate the requirements of this plant.\textsuperscript{(57)} Of course, the journals Collins subscribed to in the 1840s and 1850s, such as American Farmer, Arator, Carolina Cultivator, Farmer’s Journal, Farmers’ Register, Southern Planter devoted almost exclusively to agriculture and the mechanical arts, provided him
with much useful and practical information concerning scientific rotation of crops. Based on Collins’ rotation method was a little different from what was practiced among many other planters utilizing scientific crop rotation. Ebenezer Pettigrew, Collins’ neighboring planter, for example, practiced the three-shift rotation method; or “1st year, corn, 2nd, wheat, and 3rd, the natural weeds.”

Collins’ rotation method might not have been the typical means of crop rotation, and also seems to have had some defects, but such an innovative experiment, along with the use of fertilizers, certainly indicates his progressive and constructive attitude towards the agricultural enterprise.

With this creative, progressive, and enterprising mind and practice, Collins came to be one of the largest corn planters in antebellum North Carolina. Around 1839, he decided to grow corn as his major crop. That year he produced about 20,000 bushels of corn. Certainly, his persistent and energetic striving for the ensuing decade, especially after 1845, brought forth an almost unparalleled fruit. According to the census data in 1850 and 1860, he produced 30,000 bushels of Indian corn in 1850, and again another 30,000 bushels of it in 1860—6,000 bushels of wheat in 1850, and 5,500 bushels in 1860. Difficult to match, only a few planters in North Carolina yielded more than 60,000 bushels of corn within the same timeframe. This demonstrates how difficult it was to continually produce 30,000 bushels or more of corn every year for more than ten years. Surprisingly, “30 to 50 thousand bushels” were produced in good crop years. Also from the perspective of the number of slaves he held, Collins undoubtedly ranked among the top five planters. He had 299 slaves in 1840, 288 slaves in 1850 and 328 slaves in 1860. In sum, only in large scale plantations, with a sophisticated system of commercial corn production, characterized by mechanization and scientific farming, and a large supply of cheap slave labor, could such stupendously large amounts of corn be, for the first time, yielded.

One should also note, at the same time, that not only a small proportion of large-scale planters, like Collins, but also many slaveowners of medium-sized plantations in the northeastern region produced much more corn than was needed for plantation consumption. Over sixty slaveowners, mostly planters of less than 100 slaves, produced more than 10,000 bushels of corn in 1860. Probably over 200 slaveowners produced 5,000 or more bushels in the same year. Some examples of corn planters in Washington and Tyrrell Counties, who owned around 40 to 50 slaves and produced corn from 5,000 to less than 10,000 bushels in 1860, illustrate how their corn production fairly exceeded its estimated needs for home consumption. William A. Spruill in Washington County, for example, produced 5,000 bushels of corn as opposed to about 810 bushels a year for home consumption. William Pettigrew, Archibald Capehart, and H. B. Phelps in Washington County, who produced 6,800, 6,250, and 6,000 bushels of corn each, consumed from 1,000 to 1,500 bushels per annum. Thomas A. Clayton and Sam M. Alexander in Tyrrell County
who produced 9,000 and 7,500 bushels of corn each yet consumed only 740 bushels on the Clayton plantation, and only 680 bushels on the Alexander plantation. This means the large quantities of surplus corn were marketed for sale. Figure 2, which shows the per-capita production of corn in the region, illustrates the role the region played in its corn shipping in the antebellum South.

From the investigation so far, we should not, however, deduce that he was just a money-mad planter. William Wheelan, a Baltimore commission merchant, primarily dealing in luxury foods such as ale, beer, brandy, sherry, “Queen Tea,” “Mocha Coffee,” asparagus, cheddar cheese, “sugar-cured” hams and so on, received a business correspondence from Collins on March 8, 1859, in which he declared: As “I am a friend to improvements of all sorts, I should be willing to make an advance every [sic] in this direction, if I can see how it clearly may be done.” The fact that Collins developed a new variety of corn, resulting from “mixing some six different varieties” and sold as “Collins’s corn,” his interest in the newest “Air-tight Tin Cans” for the preservation of vegetables, with requests for some of them from William Wheelan, and the fact that he gave his youngest son indirect aid to enable him to make experiments in raising tobacco, all support Collins’ claim to Wheelan. The statement cited above could be considered to summarize his basic posture both as a man and as a planter.

It may be added here, that the “Collins’s corn,” unexpectedly enough, made a great contribution to friendly relations between the United States and Japan. In 1860, the U.S. offered the corn to the first Japanese Embassy in the United States. One of the embassy’s primary aims had been to “obtain seed of the various Cereals of the U.S..” Understanding how anxious they were to obtain it, and at the request of his friend who was on shipboard with the “Crown [A]mbassadors,” Collins promised to secure the “seed of the best variety of corn” grown in the U.S.. Collins then promptly sent the samples of his “Collins’s corn” to the Japanese Embassy with the aid of his commission merchant, Brown and De Rosset.

Corn Exportation to the Northern and Southern Eastern Coastal Markets

Some of the corn produced, and the surplus wheat and rice, excluding the amount for plantation consumption, was shipped to the nearby port of Edenton, while immense quantities were exported to ports or markets outside the state, such as Norfolk, Virginia; New York City, New York; Charleston, South Carolina and Providence, Rhode Island. At these markets, the crops, most of them corn, were sold under the charge of his commission merchants. The relationship of Collins to these merchants was, therefore, the key to his plantation system.

One of Collins’ plantation records entitled, “A Memorandum Book,” gives some useful
information (e.g. the date of shipping, the item and amount of crop shipped, destination, date of arrival, gross sales, charges, and the net proceeds, etc.) particular to the year of 1839, on the exportation of his crops, mostly corn, as, for example:

**Jany 22nd**—[Schooner] Chloe Ann for Charleston

2119 Bushels of Corn Stringfield Capt.

Arrived in Charleston 5th Feby. Corn sold at 110 cts.[.]

60 days—cash—gross sales $2398. charges $378.55

Net Amt. $2069.45. cargo overrun 61 Bushels.

**March 16th** Chloe Ann 2100 Bushels of Corn for Charleston. Stringfield Capt.

Sold at $1.05. 90 days. gross sales $2205. Charges [$]295.63

Net Amt. $1909.37 Cargo overrun 15 Bushels—

Arrived in Charleston 11th April. See Edmondston’s letter of that date and 23rd April. $20 freight paid in advance


Gross Sales &1867.72. Charges $244.66. Net Amt.

$1623.06. add $1.50 for 6 Bus. damaged. $1624.56

Cargo overrun by measure 56 Bushels.

" by weight 30 Bushels.

Advanced Freight $100.73

In the first half of the year of 1839, according to the book, he shipped his corn six times—to New York and Charleston ports three times each—at an average of 2,061 bushels each time, bringing Collins net proceeds to as much as around $1,848 per sale.74 From this, it turns out that at the end of the 1830s, Collins considered New York and Charleston the two major markets for his corn.

Though fragmentary, the comparison of net profits between New York and Charleston markets reveals to us, again, the importance of these markets for Collins. With a sale of a total of 4,112 bushels of corn at Charleston—2,100 and 2,012 bushels on March 16 and 27, respectively—he gained net proceeds of $3,857.97. At New York, he gained net proceeds of $3,313.55, by selling
approximately the same, 4,075 bushels of corn—2,075 and 2,000 bushels on May 8 and 14, respectively. The difference of these two profits, that is, $544.42 probably could have been taken by Collins to have been due to the superiority of Charleston over New York with regard to the price per bushel and the charges for handling. In fact, his corn “sold at $1.05” twice per bushel at Charleston as compared to barely selling at “95 cts[.] ... with interest” and “92 cts. [in] cash” in New York. For the charges, Collins paid a total of $452.63 for the gross sales of $4,310.60 at Charleston, as opposed to as much as $618.09 for $3,881.30 in New York. He was charged an exorbitant amount of money for his corn traded at the New York market in spite of gaining a little advantage over Charleston, in that it took 16 days on average to transport the crop by schooners to New York—4 days less on average than to transporting it to Charleston, while additionally costing $120 on average in freight on the corn for New York—$40 cheaper on average than for Charleston.\(^{(2)}\)

Thus, it turns out that Charleston, blessed with chances to gain more profits than New York, was crucial for Collins at the time. Being regions of relative corn deficits, port cities like Charleston, along with other port cities in and along coastal South Carolina, coastal Georgia and the Gulf coast of Alabama and Mississippi, were in need of outside corn importation (see Figure 2). But this does in no way reduce the importance of the New York market. New York was for Collins the very cornerstone by which to test his ability and fortune to be a successful commercial corn planter. It was, however, showing signs of becoming a competitive grain market, as evidenced by Western farmers’ access to it, backed up with the soil of surpassing fertility, combined with transportation innovations connecting the West with the East. Collins would have to watch carefully the trend of commercial production of corn in the Western states from the mid-1840s onward until 1861 (see Table 4).

Collins’ accounts with some of his commission merchants also show that Charleston and New York maintained their leading positions among his corn markets until the end of the antebellum period. The unremitting energy devoted to Collins by commission merchants, such as Charles Edmondston and L. A. Edmondston in Charleston, and Adam Tredwell & Son, and Brown, De Rosset & Co. in New York, greatly helped Collins to strengthen the export channels to those two markets in both the 1840s and the 1850s.

Charles Edmondston, commissioned from around 1840 to 1855, dealt in Collins’ corn exports to the Deep South. Most of it was sold at Charleston market. Collins’ accounts show that Charles Edmondston marketed Collins’ corn frequently in the 1840s. In the spring of 1841, C. Edmondston sold as much as 9,016 bushels of corn for Collins.\(^{(76)}\) Also in the early fifties, he worked for Collins. Collins gained, for example, a net proceeds of $743.58 from the sale of corn at
Charleston on April 22, 1853. Sometimes he received a net proceeds of about $2,000. He also got his profits from his corn, together with those from other cash crops, such as: “Nt [Net] Proceeds of Cargo Wheat & Corn pr [per] Schr High Priest [to Charleston]—- $ 3,235.70” on December 2, 1854, and “Nt Proceeds of Rice & Corn pr Schr High Priest —- $ 2,362” on April 4, 1855.\(^{(77)}\)

L. A. Edmondston, commissioned from 1856 to 1860, likewise sold Collins’ crops, mainly corn, at Charleston. As a result, Collins could gain net proceeds of about $3,515 in 1856, $4,345 in 1857, and $4,106 in 1858 from the sale of his corn. Besides these profits, he sometimes received large sums of money from L. A. Edmondston from net proceeds of sales of cargoes of “Rough Rice” and “Corn & Rough rice.” His note on March 27, 1856 was, for example, as follows: “To nett proceeds of cargo of Corn & Rough rice per schr. High Priest [to Charleston] $1,379.98”\(^{(78)}\)

At Lake Phelps, rice was cultivated, on a large scale, by the Lake Company of Josiah Collins I’s day, but the culture was abandoned, because it caused much illness among the slaves. In spite of this, actually, Josiah III continued to produce rice until the end of the antebellum period, to some extent as a cash crop. For example, Collins got net profits of “$2,221.90” in 1855 and “$2,077.96” in 1856.\(^{(79)}\)

With the help of Adam Tredwell & Son, and Brown and De Rosset dealing in his corn and wheat, Collins exported a huge amount of his corn to Northern markets along the coast, primarily to New York. Like Charles Edmondston’s trading activities for Collins in the forties, Adam Tredwell & Son, commissioned from 1839 to 1852, was engaged earnestly in the factorage in New York and served Collins. For example, Collins’ corn was shipped to New York twice in 1840, which was sold on “30th March by A Tredwell & Son [in] Ny [New York] —- $917.16” and “19th Nov‘. by A T & Son Ny —- $976.11” Especially from about 1846 onward, Collins’ corn, which sometimes included his famous “Collins Corn” was frequently marketed through Adam Tredwell & Son of New York. He marketed his corn four times in 1846, and gained net proceeds of $6,002.76. From 1847 to 1852, Collins shipped his corn three times per year on an average, bringing him net proceeds to as much as around $4,172 a year.\(^{(80)}\)

Collins’ accounts with Brown and De Rosset concerning corn sales show us clearly how his corn cargo was shipped to New York, for example, via Norfolk:

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
1854 & D^r. \\
Feby 23 & To nt proceed of Cargo Corn Shp^4, \\
 & to Norfolk by Schr. A C Williams \\
 & ____ from Norfolk to New York \\
 & by New Regulus __________________ $ 2,953.91 \\
\end{array}
\]
1856
April 5 To nett proceeds of Cargo of Corn by the
G.R. Porter via Norfolk [to New York] $ 1,870.78

1856
May 13 To nett proceeds of cargo of Corn by schr
Van Name[?] via Norfolk $ 1,625.42

As seen in these examples, in the 1850s, Collins often exported his corn, sometimes with his wheat, to New York, via Norfolk. A note dated February 24, 1842 in his ledger, covering 1839 to 1853, reveals that some of his corn was already shipped “to Norfolk & reshipped to N yoke” in the beginning of the 1840s.\(^{(82)}\)

Norfolk was important for the people of northeastern North Carolina at a relatively early stage. Because of a long chain of islands known as “banks,” a narrow barrier against the Atlantic, the people, particularly the planters in the region, sent their produce to Norfolk or Portsmouth, Virginia, and farther to New York, Philadelphia and other markets along the coast by way of Norfolk. In the nineteenth century, Norfolk further increased its importance as a transit port for exporting produce to the coastal markets, because, after the Revolution, the merchants of New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, replacing the British merchants, began to take part in the trade in the Alhemade. As a result, many corn planters in this region, like Collins, sold the crop under the charge of those merchants by the ship-load in Norfolk, or in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Providence, often via Norfolk, throughout the antebellum period.\(^{(83)}\)

There is a case when we can find the fact that Collins exported his corn to as far as Providence, Rhode Island in his account on June 9, 1846, but presumably, he shipped the crop to even more distant markets like Boston.\(^{(84)}\) In addition to Boston merchants’ brisk trade in eastern North Carolina in the nineteenth century, increased facility of transportation, with the birth of railroads in the Northeast in the mid-1830s, served to increase the amount of corn imported to the region. Boston, for example, imported 1,834,861 bushels of corn in 1840, which was nearly double the amount imported in 1835. According to a letter from Sam F. Bridge of Boston to Daniel Webster, the Secretary of State at the time, “nearly the whole amt. of Corn [imported into Boston] is rec’d from Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas.”\(^{(85)}\) Actually, Ebenezer Pettigrew, next to Collins, shipped his first cargo of corn of 1836 to New York, and the next cargo “was ordered to Boston & to be sold for cash.”\(^{(86)}\)

Collins, in short, acquired his corn markets on the East Coast, extending from the North to the Deep South. It is worthy of note that, towards the end of the antebellum period, Collins could
compete successfully with New York and Pennsylvania corn farmers, and on an even level with Western corn producers as well—such as those in Illinois, Ohio, Missouri, Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Only by means of the surprisingly fertile soil, an extremely labor-saving and scientific method of production, the employment of the cheap labor force of slaves, and a relatively easy access to the markets, could he actively compete with corn producers in the Western states as well as with those in the middle states.

Many other planters in North Carolina’s northeastern coastal plain also shipped their surplus corn by schooner to east-coastal markets. For example, as Ebenezer Pettigrew and Tristram Skinner had factors in Charleston, Baltimore, Norfolk, and New York, they sold the crop in these markets. Stephen Norfleet of Bertie County frequently shipped his corn to Norfolk and New York markets in 1850s. Lewis Thompson of Bertie County marketed his corn through factors in New York, Norfolk, and Baltimore. Henry K. Burgwyn, Sr. of Northampton County, according to his diaries, shipped his corn to Norfolk and Petersburg, Virginia, and New York in the 1840s. Many planters in the region indeed produced corn commercially, and the crop was marketed mostly through Charleston, New York, Norfolk, and Baltimore commission merchants.  

Behind the spectacular, animated scenes of shipping crops, however, Collins would often be required to pass cool and wise judgement, with eyes of an entrepreneurial capitalist, as to the fluctuations in the market price of grain, the chances for sale of his crops, and so forth. Occasionally, time pressed on him. On June 11, 1859, in reply to a letter of information concerning the state of the grain market by Brown and De Rosset, Collins answered, saying: “The decline in the Corn Market just at this time was not entirely unexpected by me. Still I am of the opinion that with occasional depressions, the Market as to this article, for several months, must rule very high—irrespective of foreign demand—from necessities purely domestic.”

As another example, in a period of less than three months, from June to September, 1859, he corresponded with Brown and De Rosset at least eight times chiefly on grain market trends in Europe. On August 2, Collins wrote his view on the influence of international politics on the markets:

The cessation of the war in Italy, must, of necessity, have a further depressing effect upon the market. We may, I suppose, for some time at least, look fr. [for] peace, but in my opinion the enigma of European Politics is by no means solved and we may look forward at no distant period to a terrific explosion.

Contrary to his expectation, however, the grain market improved, which clearly pleased him as he wrote on August 10:
It gratifies me to perceive an improvement in the Grain Market, which, tho’ [though] slight now, may, fr. [from] indications abroad, be continued. Should there be much rain in England during the harvest, and the Potatoo disease which has already made its appearance, proceed a little further, we may seasonally expect an improvement in both wheat & Corn.”(99)

Thus, it turns out that, whether he liked it or not, Collins was involved in the capitalist world market economy by the late antebellum period. Ebenezer Pettigrew earnestly examined the possibility of exporting corn to Liverpool, England in 1828, by asking one of his commission merchants to “calculate the charges to Liverpool.”(90) It is not certain that Collins designed a scheme like this, but for some part of the large planters along the Roanoke River and Albemarle Sound, who produced corn and/or wheat commercially in the antebellum period, Europe over the Atlantic, especially England, was surely within their field of vision for marketing their crops.

Besides keenly observing the fluctuations of the overseas grain market, Collins was a compelled observer of how corn and wheat grew in the Western states. As already touched on, after the mid-1830s, canals and railroads, transportation innovations that followed an east-west axis, especially the railroads after the mid-1840s, shipped Western corn to the burgeoning urban markets of the Northeast. By 1853, as table 4 shows, 63 percent of the West’s corn exports were shipped to the Northeast. As the antebellum period progressed, accordingly, the growth of the splendid corn crop produced in “the N[orth] Western States” came to be a matter of his serious concern. A business letter sent to L. A. Edmondston in 1859 demonstrates this. It reads, “I suspect for [sic] the failure of the Crops in the N. Western States,” which is “destined to rule for the remainder of the year. This will certainly be the case, if it be true, as asserted, that Illinois will be required to send as much corn westward as she ships eastward.(91)

With frequent correspondence to and from his commission merchants, and the availability of market data in his grasp, it is no wonder that Collins occasionally made sudden changes in the schedule of crop shipments to improve his chances for marketing the crops. He never left those decisions solely to commission merchants. On April 9, 1859, Collins, after fixing the date of shipping his corn, informed L. A. Edmondston of the postponement of its shipment, by saying “circumstances have led me to postpone the loading of the vessel a few days.” In another case, although the schooner “Rest” was already prepared to take in her cargo, Collins said to Brown and De Rosset in the letter of August 10, 1859, “I shall not put it on board until the first of next week, as I prefer to give the wheat a little more manipulating that it may be better protected during a long voyage.”(92) In this letter, Collins’ capitalistic attitude—trying to increase profit, even if by a little, by paying close attention to his own cargo until the last moment of its shipment—is clearly
expressed. Such an attitude on the part of Collins, just like a capitalist, sometimes brought about better results than he himself expected. L. A. Edmondston, having devoted himself to the Collins family through two generations with his father, received Collins’ letter of May 18, 1859, which says: “Yr. [Your] favor of 9 inst. [instant] is at hand containing Acct [Account] Sales of Cargo of Corn. The price obtained was an admirable one. Much in advance of what I was led to anticipate.”

The Janus-Faced Planter — Final Observations

The foregoing examination decisively confirms how Josiah Collins III produced corn commercially with considerable success through the progressive management of slave labor plantation agriculture. A large supply of cheap slave labor, the surpassing fertility of the extensive farmland, the careful preservation of the network of the drainage system, the effective use of the water-driven machinery and implements, the establishment of the streamlined water transportation system for shipping corn to markets, and the aggressive practice of scientific farming all combined to make him one of the most remarkable corn planters in antebellum North Carolina. Though each of these conditions was, of course, indispensable for his corn production, most noteworthy among those factors given above, when compared with those of Western corn producers, are his large supply of cheap slave labor and the streamlined water transportation system of conveying his corn on flatboats from field to barn and from barn to the mouth of the Scuppernong River, where it was loaded on schooners for markets.

Like Western corn producers, Collins could harvest a prodigious amount of an excellent quality of corn on extremely fertile soil. But unlike them, Collins could produce the crop with cost-efficiency by using slave labor; moreover, he had relatively easy access to the east-coastal markets like Charleston and New York City through canals, rivers, and sounds. Such circumstances gave Collins, and other commercial corn planters in northeastern North Carolina, an advantage over the Western corn producers. This advantage greatly stimulated them to produce corn commercially and to ship it for east-coastal markets in the antebellum period, which certainly contributed to a page of North Carolina’s history of the commercial production of corn, and, at the same time, left a mark on the history of slavery in the South, as well.

This essay of the economic aspect of Collins’ plantation management may lead us to characterize him as a rational capitalist. It is true, as far as his activities vis-à-vis the plantation agriculture were concerned. He did, indeed, own property, sell his produce on the free competitive markets to gain profits, paying close attention to the trend of both domestic and foreign grain
markets, and so forth. But he never intended to establish a relationship with his corn growers, that is, his slaves that could be called employee/employer, as Thomas P. and Henry K. Burgwyn in Northampton County tried to abandon slavery and create a system of employing free labor in the 1840s.(94)

Collins never had plans of substituting white free labor for slave labor. He very much saw himself as a master, not as an employer, and prided himself on being an owner of people. As the study of social relations between Collins and his slaves will disclose, Collins showed his slaves an attitude akin to a feudal lord. He preserved a pre-modern, feudal, paternalistic, and patriarchal relationship with his slaves. On Christmas mornings, for example, Collins would participate in what slaves called “John Koonering,” a kind of masquerade, festive ceremony of African origin with queer dancing and a song with a strange, monotonous cadence. One of the leading characters in the ceremony, after singing a verse or two of the song, stepped up to the master “with his hat in one hand and a tin cup in the other” to receive the expected “quarter,” which Collins donated with feelings of paternalism or patronage and also pride natural to the patriarchal, aristocratic planter. The slave immediately made “the lowest obeisance,” and shouted: “May de good Lord bless old massa and missus, and all de young massas, juba!”(95) It was also during the Christmas season that Collins gave permission to some of his slaves, most were house servants and artisans, to visit their relatives in Edenton as an extra bonus for their unwavering loyalty and devotion to the master.(96) This was one of the wide-ranging system of rewards Collins devised in order to motivate the slaves to work hard, but it was certainly, at the same time, a manifestation of his paternalism towards the elements of a community named the Somerset Place. Therefore, it can be safe to say that Collins exhibited a curious Janus-faced attitude.

But such an attitude was not unique to Collins. Many other patriarchal, aristocratic planters in the antebellum South sought their maximum profit by evey means possible, like capitalists, and it was within the very system of slavery itself.(97) In this sense, the strategy and its practice of corn production system at Somerset Place show us an example of how a paternalistic, patronizing, and aristocratic planter—and who, in a sense, might be called a typical large Southern planter—could adopt and practice a stupendously progressive plantation enterprise fairly successfully and survive as a slaveowner in the antebellum period without becoming a capitalist.
NOTES

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(5) According to article 10 of the will of Josiah Collins I, all the land property including Somerset Place Plantation was “loaned” to Josiah II “during his natural life only,” and after his death, it would be divided among his seven children “equally.” The map annexed to the will, however, evidently shows that Josiah III would inherit Somerset Place Plantation itself, while the others were to get uncultivated, wild lands. Josiah Collins II actually managed the plantation only until his son came of age. Will of Josiah Collins, Sr., 1819, Chowan County Wills, Clerk’s Office, Edenton, Bk. C., pp. 73–76. For the copy of Will of Josiah Collins, Sr. in 1819 see “Scuppernong Farms Project (RF-NC 25), Washington and Tyrrell Counties,” vol. 1, Chapter 9, the Resettlement Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, comp., in the Farm Security Administration Papers, 2 vols., North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh (hereinafter cited as SFP in FSA Papers, NCAH).


Josiah Collins III. Antebellum Corn Planter in North Carolina: An Examination of His Plantation


(14) On the shift of production from rice and wheat to corn as the primary crop, see Farmers’ Register, vol. 7, no. 12 (December, 1839), pp. 728–729. Referring in it to Collins’ decision to decrease the production of wheat, Ruffin said, “Collins has recently abandoned its culture, except on a small scale, for home consumption.” Actually, however, he exported wheat to some extent through the end of the antebellum period. Rice was cultivated by the Lake Company to a great extent, and “with good success.” But later, rice culture was abandoned as causing “so much sickness among the slaves.”

(15) Josiah II was an active merchant in Edenton, but also operated a rope factory. Through his management, this factory became a profitable venture, and he was known as a manufacturer of superior cordage for shipbuilders. Powell, ed., Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, vol. 1, p. 405; George P. Collins, “Discovery of Lake Scuppernong,” p. 25.


(18) Ann Blount Pettigrew to Mary Williams Bryan, October 20, 1828, Ibid., p. 103.


(20) As Roanoke Island fell to Federal Forces in February, 1862, and as a result of the danger of invasion by Federal Forces into the Albemarle Sound country in North Carolina increased, Collins’ family and slaves were forced to flee Somerset Place for Hillsboro (now spelled Hillborough), Orange County, N.C. in March, 1862. Collins, therefore, could not have managed his plantation earnestly in 1862. Tarlton, Somerset Place, pp. 41–42; John C. Sykes, III, A Collins Family Compendium (Creswell, N.C.: Somerset Place Foundation, 1991), pp. 15–16; Powell, ed., Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, vol. 1, p. 406.

(22) Plantation Record from January 1850 to July 1853 (A.B. 265.6) (hereinafter cited as Plantation Record, 1850–1853), January 9, April 22, 1850, April 13, 1853, August 23, 1850, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH. See also Plantation Record, 1850-1853, January 7, 9, 10, 12, 16, 17, February 1, 2, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 16, 20, 21, 23, 25, 27, 28, March 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, April 4, 18, 20, 22, 23, 24, 27, May 2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 22, 25, 27, 28, 31, June 3, 4, July 30, 31, August 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 28, 29, September 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 13, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30, October 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 23, 24, 29, 31, November 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 27, December 2, 19, 21, 23, 1850, January 3, 8, March 26, 28, 29, 31, April 28, 30, May 1, 2, 3, 5, 24, 26, June 2, 11, July 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 24, 25, 28, 30, 31, August 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, September 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 25, 26, 27, October 9, 10, 11, 13, 20, 21, 22, 25, November 14, 15, December 11, 17, 19, 23, 30, 31, 1851, January 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16, 19, 28, February 6, March 25, 26, 27, 29, 31, April 5, 6, 7, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, August 2, 3, 4, 10, 12, 17, 18, 19, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, September 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 20, 27, October 6, 9, November 13, 15, 17, 20, 23, 24, December 10, 11, 24, 30, 31, 1852, January 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, March 21, 22, 23, 24, 26. April 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 23, 1853, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.

(23) Farmers’ Register, vol. 7, no. 12, p. 727.


(26) Farmers’ Register, vol. 7, no. 12, p. 729. See also Uriah Bennett interview, SFP in FSA Papers, NCAH. Uriah Bennett was a field hand on Somerset Place Plantation before the Civil War. He was born a slave on Somerset Plantation about 1845. Both of his parents were also field hands. This interview was held in May, 1937.

(27) A rice machine was built by the Lake Company as early as around 1794. Tarlton, Somerset Place, p. 7.


(29) Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling, eds., Quebec to Carolina in 1785–1786: Being the Travel Diary and Observations of Robert Hunter, Jr., a Young Merchant of London (San Marino, California, 1943), p. 266; Crittenden, Commerce of North Carolina, p. 15. In the Albemarle, the early planters in colonial days settled “only along the creeks, rivers and sounds.” The same was true in the nineteenth century. F. W. Clonts, “Travel and Transportation in Colonial North Carolina,” North Carolina Historical Review 3 (January, 1926), p. 16.


(33) Daybook of Josiah Collins from January 1842 to January 1846 (A.B. 265.1) (hereinafter cited as Daybook, 1842–1846), March 28, 1844, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH; Ledger A: Account Book of Josiah Collins from January 1, 1839–March 1, 1853 (A.B. 265.4), June 25, 1847, June 16, 1848, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH; Daybook of Josiah Collins from January 1848 to [July 1856] (A.B. 265.2) (hereinafter cited as Daybook, 1848–1856), September 12, 1848, August 21, 1851, June 29, 1854, June 12, 1855, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH; Ledger B: Account Book of Josiah Collins from March 1, 1853 to February, 1867 (but actually up to 1861) (A.B. 265.5), September 6, 1855, July 16, 1856, July 25, 1857, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH. See also Ledger A, June 18, November 22, 1847, July 15, September 27, September 30, 1848, May 29, July 16, 1849, February 15, March 27, 1850, October 25, 1851, September 23, 1852, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH; Ledger B, May 7, 1853, October 16, 1854, June 12, November 16, 1855, April 21, 1856, December 24, 1857, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH; Daybook, 1842–1846, June 8, June 27, July 25, 1844, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH; Daybook, 1848–1856, June 28, 1848, May 29, July 6, July 16, 1849, March 27, 1850, September 23, 1852, September 30, 1853, October 16, 1854, June 11, July 20, November 6, 1855, Josiah Collins Papers,
NCAH; Daybook, July 1856–February 1867 (but actually up to June, 1863 and January and February only in 1867) (hereinafter cited as Daybook, 1856–1867), August 26, 1857, July 1, 1859. Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.


(35) William L. Barney, The Passage of the Republic: An Interdisciplinary History of Nineteenth-Century America (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Company, 1987), pp. 29–30. This explains the reason that most commercial corn planters also produced wheat, entailing no more than 35 labor-hours per acre, to make effective use of slaves’ labor hours.

(36) Plantation Record, 1850–1853, April 17, May 25, May 6, October 22, November 22, 1850, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH. See also Plantation Record, January 28, 29, February 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 21, 25, May 7, 20, 29, 30, 31, June 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, September 28, October 24, 25, 28, 29, 30, November 12, December 30, 1850, January 15, 16, 25, February 5, 11, 17, April 19, 21, 29, May 3, 1851, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.

(37) Inventory of Personal Property of Josiah Collins III (1863) in Tarlton, Somerset Place, p. 71.

(38) Plantation Record, 1850–1853, April 23, 24, 1850, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH. See also Plantation Record, April 20, 29, 30, 1850, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.

(39) Plantation Record, 1850–1853, May 1, 1850, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.


(41) Plantation Record, 1850–1853, June 19, 26, 1850, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.

(42) Uriah Bennett interview, SFP in FSA Papers, NCAH.

(43) The problem of soil fertility also attracted considerable attention among the agricultural leaders in North Carolina from 1820 to 1860, particularly from 1845 to 1860. Cathey, Agricultural Developments, pp. 95, 96–99.

(44) Cathey, Ibid., pp. 41–43; Cathey, Agriculture in North Carolina, pp. 21–22, 29.

(46) Memorandum Book (P.C. 417:12), p. 6, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.

(47) These figures include freight. Besides lime and ‘shell lime,’ ‘oyster shells’ are also included, because Collins refers to it in his records as “To pd [paid] fr [for] Oyster Shells to make Lime” in Plantation Record, 1850–1853, December 14, 1850. Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH. The data shows that the peak of Collins’ buying lime was around 1847 or 1848. For information about lime purchasing see Ledger A, November 3, December 28, 1843, February 17, July 15, August 31, 1844, March 26, April 29, May 23, August 14, December 11, December 13, 1845, January 29, February 20, May 4, July 21, August 5, November 28, 1846, January 18, March 15, May 28, June 30, August 13, November 12, 1847, February 15, April 17, June 8, August 8, November 18, December 1, December 30, 1848, February 10, April 12, May 14, 1849, March 23, April 6, October 16, December 14, December 31, 1850, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.

(48) Edmund Ruffin, *Agricultural, Geological, and Descriptive Sketches of Lower North Carolina, and the Similar Adjacent Lands* (Raleigh: The Institution for the Deaf & Dumb & the Blind, 1861), p. 238 (microfilm). The sum of lime of each year from 1851 to 1860 is as follows: no record in 1851 and 1852; $400.00 in 1853; $460.00 in 1854; no record in 1855 and 1856; $80.00 in 1857; $60.00 in 1858; $224.51 in 1859; and $100.87 in 1860. Experiments with lime were conducted by some leading planters in the northeastern part of North Carolina. Henry K. Burgwyn, Sr., for example, used lime frequently. There was also a case when he experimented with lime by soaking corn “in salt lime 3 dys & rub’d in lime.” Henry King Burgwyn, Sr. *Typescript Diaries* (1844-1845 (P.C. 515:1), April 1, 1847, NCAH. For other examples see Henry King Burgwyn, Sr. *Typescript Diaries*, 1840-1842 (P.C. 515:1), April 9, May 1, 5, 6, November 8, 1841, February 21, 1842, NCAH; Henry K. Burgwyn Diaries, 1844-1848, October 29, December 24, 1844, February 24, March 2, 3, 6, 7, 26, April 5, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 27, 28, June 7, November 7, 1845, March 23, May 29, November 1, 2, 10, 16, 17, December 31, 1846, January 1, 28, September 2, December 24, 1847, January 19, 30, February 1, May 8, September 27, 1848, NCAH; Plantation Journals, 1843-1863, May, June, July, August, 1845, May, June, July, October, 1846, July, 1847, May, 1848, March, May, 1856, Folder 68, in the Skinner Family Papers #669, SHC; Stephen Norfleet Account Book, 1852-1873, September, 1854, September, 1856, January, September, 1857, July, 1858, January, June, 1859, March, November, 1860, January, 1861, Folder 7, in the Norfleet Family Papers #549, SHC.

(49) *Farmers’ Register*, vol. 7, no. 11, p. 700.

(50) Ledger A, December 17, 1846, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.


(52) Josiah Collins to Hardy & Brothers, August 7, 1860, Letterbook, p. 423, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH; Daybook, 1842–1846, September 3, 1844, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH; Ledger A, March 23, 1853, May 5, 1854, February 23, 1856, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH; Josiah Collins to Hardy & Brothers, September 4, 1860, Letterbook, p. 428, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH. Stephen Norfleet purchased guano as follows: 310 pounds in 1853; 8174 pounds in 1854; 2056 pounds in 1855; 3 tons in 1856; 1 ton and “4 Bags” (about 620 pounds) in 1857; 3 tons in 1858; 5470 pounds in 1859; 5 tons in 1860; 7 tons in 1861.
Stephen Norfleet Account Book, 1852-1873, April, 1853, February, 1854, March, 1855, January, 1856, March, 1857, February, 1858, March, 1859, February, April, 1860, March, April, 1861, Folder 7, in the Norfleet Family Papers #549, SHC.
(53) Ruffin, Agricultural, Geological, and Descriptive Sketches, p. 238.
(54) Farmers’ Register, vol. 7, no. 12, p. 729.
(56) For the cultivation of wheat crop see Cathey, Agriculture in North Carolina, p. 37; Cathey, Agricultural Developments, p. 135.
(58) The place and term of publication of each of these journals are: American Farmer (Baltimore, Maryland, 1819–1834), Arator (Raleigh, North Carolina, 1855–1857), Carolina Cultivator (Raleigh, North Carolina, 1855–1857), Farmer’s Journal (Bath and Raleigh, North Carolina, 1852–1854), Farmers’ Register (Petersburg, Virginia, 1833–1842), Southern Planter (Richmond, Virginia, 1841–). Regarding the information on these journals see, for example, Daybook, 1842–1846, July 9, 1842, January 10, February 7, 1844, December 30, 1845, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH; Daybook, 1848–1856, March 10, 1851, July, 1852, April, 1853, May, 1854, April, 1855, June, 1856, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH; Daybook, 1856–1867, May, 1858, May, July, 1859, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH. For a list of agricultural journals published in the antebellum South, see, for example, Gray, History of Agriculture, vol. 2, pp. 1008–1009.
(59) Farmers’ Register, vol. 7, no. 12, p. 730.
(60) Memorandum Book, pp. 7–9, 22, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.
(62) The survey of the yield of corn by individual farmers in both 1850 and 1860, who produced corn in counties covering the basin of the Roanoke River, and the area of Albemarle Sound in the eastern coastal plain region in North Carolina, shows that Collins produced the fourth largest corn crop total in both those years, next to Samuel Williams in Bertie County (75,000 bushels), David Clark (69,500 bushels), Thomas P. Deveraux in Halifax County (66,000 bushels). Thomas Newby in Perquimans County produced the same 60,000 bushels of corn as Collins. Samuel Williams produced 75,000 bushels in 1850 only, and Thomas Newby produced 55,000 bushels out of 60,000 bushels in 1860. If we look at the data in a single year, Perry C. Tyler and Humphrey D. Hardy in Bertie County produced 55,000 and 50,000 bushels in 1850 respectively. Charles Pettigrew in Tyrrell County and Richard H. Smith in Halifax County also produced as much as 35,000 and 30,000 bushels in 1860 respectively. John R. Donnel and D. D. Simmons in Hyde County also produced 30,000 bushels of corn in 1860, but had no record in 1850. The counties surveyed were considered the areas where there were planters devoting themselves almost exclusively to corn production. Those counties are follows: Currituck, Camden, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Chowan, Washington, Tyrrell, Gates, Hertford, Northampton, Bertie, Halifax, Edgecombe, Martin, Pitt, Beaufort and Hyde. The Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Alamance—Yancey County, North Carolina, Agriculture Schedule, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (microfilm, State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh); The Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Alamance—Yancey County, North Carolina, Agriculture Schedule, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (microfilm, State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh).
(65) This is the result of the survey of the seventeen counties given in the note (62). The Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Alamance—Yancey County, North Carolina, Agriculture Schedule, National
Archives, Washington, D.C. (microfilm, State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh).

(66) For computing corn consumption on the plantations, the following formula was utilized:
\[
C = (13 \times Z) + (4 \times S) + (7.5 \times H)
\]
- \(C\) = Corn Consumption (bu.)
- \(Z\) = number of human consuming units
- \(S\) = number of swine
- \(H\) = number of horses and mules


(67) Cf. Lorena S. Walsh, “Plantation Management in the Chesapeake, 1620-1820,” *Journal of Economic History,* 44 (June, 1984), p. 397. Walsh referred to the corn output per hand throughout the Chesapeake, from 1730 to 1820, as follows: “Everywhere maize crops reached 10 or more barrels per hand, a level of deliberate market production where about half of the crop was marketable surplus.”

(68) Josiah Collins to William Wheelan, March 8, 1859. Letterbook, p. 168, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH. For the goods Collins purchased from Wheelan, see Josiah Collins to William Wheelan, June 24, 1858, February 17, March 8, May 21, 1859, March 1, 1860, Letterbook, pp. 156, 168, 226, 333, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.


(70) Josiah Collins to William Wheelan, July 26, 1859, March 27, 1860, Letterbook, pp. 272, 352, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.

(71) Josiah Collins to Hardy & Brothers, Letterbook, 1858–1861, April 2, April 25, May 5, 1859, pp. 191, 204, 208, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.

(72) Josiah Collins to Brown and De Rosset, July 13, 1860, Letterbook, p. 411, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.

(73) Underlines in citation as per the original. Memorandum Book, pp. 19–20, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.

(74) At Charleston market, 2119, 2100, and 2012 bushels of his corn were sold on January 22, March 16, and March 27, respectively. On May 8, 14, and June 14, 2075, 2000, and 1201 bushels were sold respectively at New York market. The figures are, however, calculated by excluding the data on June 14 because the net proceeds of corn exported are not recorded. Memorandum Book, pp. 19–21, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.

(75) Memorandum Book, pp. 19–20, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH. It was not unusual for factors to demand their charges of twelve to twenty per cent of the gross sales on products.

(76) Ledger A, April 1, 28, May 12, 27, 1841, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH. For other examples see Ledger A, April 22, 1840, June 19, 1841, January 27, February 18, October 27, 1842, March 26, April 16, June 4, 30, 1846, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.

(77) Ledger B, April 22, 1853, May 30, June 10, December 2, 1854, April 4, 1855, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH. For other examples see Ledger A, November 28, 1851, January 5, 1852, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH; Ledger B, August 30, November 22, 1853, April 19, May 31, July 10, 1854, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH. See also Ledger B, May 20, 1854, January 20, 1855, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.

(78) Ledger B, May 2, June 7, 1856, January 14, March 20, 1857, April 16, May 20, 1858, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH. For other examples see Ledger B, February 23, May 9, 1858, January 9, February 29, 1860, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH; Josiah Collins to L. A. Edmondston, Letterbook, pp. 196, 223, 325, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH. For sale of “Rough Rice” or “Corn & Rough rice” see Ledger B, January 29, February 23, March 27, 1856, February 14, November 13, 1857, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.

(80) Ledger A, June 8, December 17, 1840, January 29, March 12, December 31, 1846, June 24, December 23, 1847, April 19, May 25, September 20, December 30, 1848, February 14, 28, March 23, April 5, May 12, 1849, March 23, May 4, June 22, 1850, September 3, 1851, April 29, October 30, November 13, December 24, 1852, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.

(81) Ledger B, February 23, 1854, April 5, May 13, 1856, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.

(82) Ledger A, February 24, 1842, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH; Stephen Norfleet Account Book, 1852–1873, June, 1855, Folder 7, in the Norfleet Family Papers #549, SHC.


(84) Ledger A, June 9, 1846, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.


(88) Josiah Collins to Brown and De Rosset, June 11, 1859, Letterbook, p. 243, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.

(89) Josiah Collins to Brown and De Rosset, August 2, August 10, 1859, Letterbook, pp. 276, 282, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH. See also Josiah Collins to Brown and De Rosset, June 11, August 16, August 25, 1859, Letterbook, pp. 243, 288, 292, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.


(91) Josiah Collins to L. A. Edmondston, April 9, 1859, Letterbook, p. 196, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH. For the transportation innovations see, for instance, Barney, Passage of the Republic, pp. 18–25.

(92) Josiah Collins to L. A. Edmondston, April 9, 1859, Letterbook, p. 282, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH; Josiah Collins to Brown and De Rosset, August 10, 1859, Letterbook, p. 282, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.

(93) Josiah Collins to L. A. Edmondston, May 18, 1859, Letterbook, p. 223, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.

(94) The Burgwyn brothers wanted to manumit their slaves and use hired labor instead, probably to increase efficiency. They began to import more than thirty Irish workers from New York and Boston in 1848, but were forced to give up the experiment owing to too much expenditure. This can be considered an example of the capricious plantation owners’ experiment of shifting the economic system from one of slave labor to
one of free labor, meaning the abandonment of slavery. Henry K. Burgwyn Diaries, 1844–1848, January 3, 20, February 15, 16, 28, 29, March 3, 4, 6, 7, 19, 29, April 8, 1848. NCAH.

(95) Edward Warren, *A Doctor’s Experiences in Three Continents* (Baltimore: Cushings & Bailey, Publishers, 1885), pp. 200–203. The song that droned out in this ceremony was like:

“My massa am a white man, Juba!
Old missus am a lady, juba!
De children am de honey-pods, juba! juba!
Krismas come but once a year, juba!
Juba! juba! O, ye juba!

“De darkeys lubs de hoe-cake, juba!
Take de ‘quarter’ for to buy it, juba!
Fetch him long, you white folks, juba! juba!
Krismas come but once a year, juba!
Juba! juba! O, ye juba!”


(96) Memorandum Book, pp. 2–3, Josiah Collins Papers, NCAH.

FIGURE 1

THE NORHEASTERN REGION OF NORTH CAROLINA
FIGURE 2
CORN PRODUCTION PER CAPITA
IN 1840, 1850, AND 1860 OF THE SOUTH

### TABLE 1

SLAVE LABOR-HOURS PER ACRE FOR STAPLE CROPS, 1840

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Before Harvest</th>
<th>Harvest</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### TABLE 2

CROP ROTATION SCHEDULE FOR SOMERSET PLACE PLANTATION
FROM JANUARY 1849 TO JULY 1853

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field \ Year</th>
<th>1849</th>
<th>1850</th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1852</th>
<th>1853</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negro Patch</td>
<td>(W.)</td>
<td>W. C.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Old New Ground</td>
<td>C.(W.)</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Old New Ground</td>
<td>C.(W.)</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Rice Field</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>Pea</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Rice Field</td>
<td>C., Pot.</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billet Field</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>R.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallows Field</td>
<td>C., Ct.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>R.</td>
<td>C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brier Hall</td>
<td>C.,(W.),Ct.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pot., Hay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83 Acre</td>
<td>(W.)</td>
<td>W.</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74 Acre</td>
<td>(W.)</td>
<td>W.</td>
<td>C.,(W.)</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Side Field</td>
<td>(W.)</td>
<td>W.</td>
<td>C.,(W.)</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>R.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Field</td>
<td>(W)</td>
<td>C.,W.</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canal Side</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Town Field</td>
<td>(W.)</td>
<td>W.,Ctv.</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td>C.,Pea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuscarora</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>R.</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td>R.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field \ Year</td>
<td>1849</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>1852</td>
<td>1853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Cut</td>
<td>(W.)</td>
<td>W.</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td>Pea</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barn Cut</td>
<td>(W.)</td>
<td>W</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Boundary</td>
<td>(W.)</td>
<td>W.</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td>C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saw Mill Cut</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato Patch</td>
<td>Pot.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton Patch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnip Patch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay Field</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field B</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td>C., Pea</td>
<td>C.,(W.)</td>
<td>W</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field C</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td>C., Pea</td>
<td>C.,(W.)</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field D</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td>C.,(W.)</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field E</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td>C.,(W.)</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field F</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td>C., Pea</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field G</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field H</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td>C., Flx.</td>
<td>C.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Notes: 1. In some fields, the work of “pulling up corn stalks” was done in early 1850. As this description clearly indicates that corn was harvested in 1849, ‘C’ has also been noted in the table.
2. In the case of wheat, a two-year crop, we find ‘(W)’ in the first year of planting and a ‘W’ in the crop’s second year, when it is actually harvested. In cases where Collins noted wheat harvest in one year without noting wheat planting in the previous year, the implied planting has been noted with a ‘(W).’
   * Blank denotes some reference to the field, which is not related to crops.

Source: Organized from, Plantation Record from January 1850 to July 1853, Josiah Collins Papers, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.
# TABLE 3

**THE DATE AND ACTIVITY OF SLAVE WORK ON THEIR ‘NEGRO PATCH,’**  
**JOSIAH COLLINS III PLANTATION, SOMERSET PLACE,**  
**WASHINGTON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA, 1850**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td><em>Men still at Western cutting logs — 15 Women cutting Reeds &amp; Briers—Rest of Women with Children picking up Chunks in Negro Patch &amp; 83 acre—2 Carts hauling wood—2 Men went around Lake Gate Canal taking out Chunks—2 hands burning coal—</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/19</td>
<td>“9 Ploughs in Lower Rice field till 8 oclock—2 Machines Cutting* Wheat in Negro Patch till 12 oclock 1 balance of day—binders as before 16 cradlers till 8 oclock—balance of hands picking cheat from wheat till 8 oclock—rest of day binding hauling &amp; stowing in Machine house”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/20</td>
<td>“Same Plough work as yesterday—Balance of hands cutting, shucking tying hauling &amp; stowing wheat from 74 acre Negro Patch &amp; Adam Cut Harvest still—”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/26</td>
<td>“6 Waggons hauling wheat from Negro Patch— Machine &amp; balance of hands in 83 acre &amp; Indian Town field Harvest”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/6</td>
<td>“13 Ploughs in Gallows field—8 waggon hauling wheat from Indian Town Part of hands Thrashing &amp; part raking wheat in Negro Patch—”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>“14 ploughs in Gallows field—3 waggon hauling wheat from Barn to Machine House—Part of hands Thrashing—Part raking wheat in Negro Patch—Balance setting up corn in Gallows &amp; Billet fields”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/9</td>
<td>“4 Ploughs in Potato Patch 10 Hands hilling potatoes—Balance Thrashing &amp; raking wheat in Negro Patch—”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/23</td>
<td>“Women cleaning 3ft ditches in Adam Cut &amp; Negro Patch, Men Cutting 3 ft ditches in Billet field”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/21</td>
<td>“All hands carrying corn from Barn &amp; shelling till 10 oclock—Balance of day 24 hands cleaning out tap ditches in Negro Patch, Adam Cut &amp; North Boundary—5 Men hauling straw from Barn—Women loading &amp; unloading wagons—”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/16</td>
<td>“2 ploughs in Negro Patch—Balance of men with women cleaning Hogs—stopped by rain—Balance of day shucked corn &amp; put hogs in pens—”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/17</td>
<td>“4 ploughs in Negro Patch—2 in 83 acre—Balance of men cutting &amp; salting pork—Women gleaning corn at Western—”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/18</td>
<td>“9 Ploughs in Negro Patch—2 do in 83 acre—Balance of Men Cutting Wood—Women gleaning corn at Western—5 hands fryng fat”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12/19 Thursday  "Same ploughs as yesterday—Balance of Men with part of Women cutting hauling & bringing up wood Balance of Women cleaning stable yard cleaning furrows in Negro Patch and frying fat"

12/20 Friday  "11 Ploughs in Negro Patch—Balance of Men with part of women getting wood—Balance of women fixing corn in Barn—"

12/23 Monday  "9 Ploughs in Negro Patch & 83 acre  Balance of Men at Western cutting logs  Women cleaning out tap ditches in field C  Burning grass & pulling up stalks in field F"

*Underlines shown as per the original.

Source: Plantation Record from January 1850 to July 1853, Josiah Collins Papers, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

### TABLE 4

THE PERCENTAGE OF WESTERN CORN EXPORTS MOVING TO THE NORTHEAST, EAST, AND SOUTH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Volume Shipped</th>
<th>Percentage shipped to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Northeast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>1,000,000 bushels</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>1,000,000 bushels</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>1,500,000 bushels</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>6,000,000 bushels</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>8,000,000 bushels</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>