



A Voice Unheard...



Detail from \$50 bill, Bank of Pittsylvania, State of Virginia, courtesy Smithsonian Institution, NNC, Douglas Mudd.

1 Walnut Table 1.00 x 6 1/2 bottles	3 58
Edwards 2.58	
Edward \$350. Hamilton 21 years	500 00
102 cows \$150	
Minta \$150. Mary & three children 150	600 00
Rachael & two children	300 00
Patsy & Matilda	350 00
Julia 62.50. Eliza & Baby 250	312 50
1 Iron Pot	2 00
1 old smaller size & hook	1 25
1 ditto ditto	00 50
Covens	1 50
1 Clewpe and Briddle	" 75
1 frying pan & Gridiron	" 25
4 flat Iron 75. 2 Tea Kettles 75	1 50
1 steaming Kettle	1 00

1 Corn Sheller	
2 Hacks of wheat with straw	1 00
Valued at 40 Bushels @ 80	33 00
1 Iron brand Key	
1 Earster with trap stumps	1 00
27 sheep, & 12 Lambs	10 00
5 demijohns @ 50. 225	27 00
2 Shaf Shears	3 25
	1 00
Negro Slave named George	300 00
	322 1/2 08 1/2

When John Henry DeButts died in 1831, he left a will describing how to divide his property. This inventory of his possessions helped fulfill the terms of the will. The value of his personal property was \$3,224.08. His sixteen enslaved workers accounted for \$2,512.50—more than three quarters of the total.

Freeing an enslaved person is called manumission. Records of manumissions in Prince George's County show that a brother and sister, John and Nelly Ganer, were born a year apart at Mount Welby. They were sold to Thomas S. Moore, who lived nearby, and freed by him on August 28, 1830.

From the late 1600s to the early 1800s, tobacco, wheat, and other crops helped bring prosperity to slaveholders on this farm—at the price of bondage, hard labor, and broken families for enslaved African Americans.

No information about the lives of enslaved people here survives in their own words. The wills, letters, and records of slaveholders tell part of the story, but only from the slaveholders' point of view. In the early 1800s at least half of the population of Prince George's County was enslaved African Americans.

African Americans named George, Edward, Hamilton, Minta, Patsy, and Matilda, among others, lived in bondage on this land. Most able-bodied enslaved people—men, women, and older children—worked in the fields. One or two enslaved women on this farm probably worked as cooks or servants in the main house. Enslaved African Americans were considered property by law, and were by far the most valuable property after the land itself.

A few enslaved people who lived here were freed by slaveholders, usually after years of forced service. Along with their labor, African Americans—free and enslaved—brought their languages, skills, food, music, stories, and history to this farm, Maryland, and the nation.

Maryland Prince Georges County Set.
I Philomena Clerk Register of the last
said County do hereby certify that the bearer
hereof negro John Ganer age five feet seven
and a quarter inches high having a scar on the
left side of her face of a dark complexion about
an inch square near the year and one
by a burn who was born and raised in
the County aforesaid is a free person and
entitled to her freedom by virtue of the last
will and Testament of a certain Thomas S.
Moore late of Prince Georges County deceased
bearing date the 28th day of August Eighteen
hundred and thirty and
I Testimony whereof
This 5th day of May
1830
Identified by
Thomas Grimes
1830

No Prince Georges County Set.
I Philomena Clerk Register of Mills for
said County do hereby certify that the bearer
hereof negro John Ganer age five feet seven
and a quarter inches high having a scar on the
left side of her face of a dark complexion about
an inch square near the year and one
by a burn who was born and raised in
the County aforesaid is a free person and
entitled to her freedom by virtue of the last
will and Testament of a certain Thomas S.
Moore late of Prince Georges County deceased
bearing date the 28th
day of August 1830 and
I Testimony whereof
This 5th day of May
1830
Identified by
Thomas Grimes
1830