

Smith, Deborah A. "The Potter Estate: Colerain & Tweedside Plantations, 1811-1856." *Journal of Slavery and Data Preservation* 6, no. 3 (2025): 161-172. <http://doi.org/10.14321/jsdp.6.3.0161>.

The Potter Estate: Colerain & Tweedside Plantations, 1811- 1856

Dataset Article

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Description

The George M. Jones Memorial Library (aka Jones Memorial Library or JML) is a specialized genealogy and history library in Lynchburg, Virginia.¹ Starting in 2023, JML began a long-term

¹ The George M. Jones Memorial Library opened in 1908 as the second public library in the state. In 1969 the Library deaccessioned its fiction holdings to re-focus as a specialized collection of Central Virginia genealogy and history. JML preserves more than 20,000 books, 5,000 sets of architectural plans, and 600 manuscripts. See <https://www.jmlibrary.org> for more about the library. Smith is Executive Director; Glover is a May 2025 history graduate of Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio and completed a virtual internship with JML in January 2024. The author thanks the following individuals and institutions for their assistance and

project to document the names of enslaved persons documented in the Library's manuscript collections. In December 2023, JML published an initial dataset with Enslaved.org.² In 2024, JML staff and interns identified documents from *JML Manuscript Collection 1141: The Potter Estate Papers* for digitization, transcription, and data extraction.

About the Potter Estate Papers

Manuscript Collection 1141 was given to Jones Memorial Library in 2013. The papers had been held by the Pillow family and are believed to have been acquired by a family member who salvaged them from "a demolished law firm located on Main Street" in Lynchburg. In 2024, Library staff researched the city's law firms and concluded that the Potter papers may have come from the files of Hester & Hester.³

The dataset was compiled using 15 of 16 original documents held in JML Manuscript Collection 1141. These documents include copies and originals of wills, deeds, bills of sale, receipts, inventories, and certificates for John Potter (1765-1849), his sons James Potter (1793-1862) and Thomas Fuller Potter (1806-1853), and James Potter's son-in-law John Devall Langhorne (1824-1915).⁴

Scholars may be interested in additional materials from the Potter Estate Papers manuscript collection that have not been digitized. These papers document crop yields, patents, railroad

engagement with this project: Malena Glover (Oberlin College Center for Engaged Liberal Arts); Steven S. Brown, Gwen Wells, Nancy Jamerson Weiland, Chuck Bradner, Douglas MacLeod, Matthew Parker, and Garrett Reynolds (Jones Memorial Library).

² *The Seth Woodroof Account Book*, *JML Manuscript 1047* names and enumerates more than 200 persons enslaved by Seth Woodroof in Lynchburg in the 1830s. See Deborah A. Smith, "Seth Woodroof Account Book, Jones Memorial Library: Sales of Enslaved Persons in Lynchburg, Virginia 1834-1840," *Journal of Slavery and Data Preservation* 4, no. 5 (2023): 76-81, <https://doi.org/10.25971/cnwq-vn64>.

³ Albert Sydney Hester (1864-1954) was born to parents who lived in Alabama. In 1899, Albert established a legal practice in the Law Building at 807 Main Street in Lynchburg. He practiced from this location until 1925. From 1926 until 1945, Albert Hester practiced from an office in the Krise Building on Ninth Street at Main Street (coincidentally, this intersection was the location of the city's main slave market in the 1800s). During this period Albert's son, Morris Hamlet Hester (1894-1990), became a partner in the firm, which was then known as Hester and Hester. Hester & Hester moved their offices to the Lynch Building at 822 ½ Main Street in 1946. The Lynch Building was built in 1873. According to the Lynchburg City Directory, several attorneys are known to have had offices in the building. The offices of Hester & Hester, and later Morris Hester, were listed in rooms 401-402 between 1950 and 1969. Albert S. Hester died in 1954 and his son, Morris H. Hester, continued to practice in the Lynch Building until 1969. The Law Building, where Albert Hester established his first practice, was demolished in 1948. The Lynch Building, where Albert and Morris practiced together, was demolished in 1970. It is possible that the Potter Estate Papers were salvaged from one of these locations.

⁴ John, James, and Thomas Potter resided in Chatham County, Georgia and also in Princeton, New Jersey. John Langhorne was born in Mason County, Kentucky and died in Washington, D. C. Langhorne married Mary Marshall Potter, daughter of James Potter and Sarah Jones Grimes. Between 1853 and 1884, he resided in Lynchburg, Virginia and was listed as a "planter", "manufacturer", and "banker" in census and marriage records. Following James's death in 1862, Langhorne served as co-executor of the estate. Langhorne's son, Cary DeVall Langhorne (1837-1948), is honored with an historic marker in the city's Diamond Hill neighborhood.

and canal construction, cedar logging, and mining in the area. A finding aid for the collection is available with the Jones Memorial Library Digital Collections.⁵ Relevant resources are also held by the Georgia Historical Society in Savannah, Georgia. These resources include a plantation journal listing slave births, and scrapbooks that document the industrial use of the land post-emancipation.⁶

Potter Family

John Potter was born in Ireland and emigrated first to Charleston, South Carolina and later Savannah, Georgia. In 1791 he married Catherine Fuller. John and Catherine had several children, including sons James and Thomas. In 1824 the couple purchased Prospect Farm in Princeton, New Jersey, although they continued to reside primarily in Georgia. When in New Jersey, Potter was involved with the construction of the Delaware and Raritan Canal and was influential in Princeton's Trinity Church.⁷ Potter died in 1849 and is buried in the church cemetery.

James Potter was John and Catherine's eldest son. He married Sarah Jones Grimes in 1827. Grimes was the daughter of John Grimes and Catherine Jones Glenn. They had several children, including Mary Marshall Potter, who married John Deval Langhorne in 1853 in Princeton. In 1840, James Potter purchased Palmer House in Princeton from his sister Harriet and her husband, Robert F. Stockton.⁸ In addition to the Potter family's philanthropy in New Jersey, James pledged money to The University of the South (Sewanee). He died before realizing his pledge but his son-in-law Telfair Hodgson served as vice-chancellor of the university and fulfilled the pledge, which supported construction of the university's library.⁹ Although not included in the dataset, James Potter's 1845 will, which directed the distribution of his property and lists his

⁵ "Potter Estate Papers," Manuscript Collection 1141, Jones Memorial Library (JML), Lynchburg, VA, <https://digital.jmlibrary.org/s/collections/item/353#lg=1&slide=0>

⁶ GHS 0630, James Potter plantation journal, 1828-1831, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia, <https://7063.sydneyplus.com/archive/final/Portal.aspx?lang=en-US> and GHS 1248, Richard Marvin Nelson business scrapbooks, 1929-1951, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia, <https://7063.sydneyplus.com/archive/final/Portal.aspx?lang=en-US>.

⁷ Trip Henningsen, "The Potter Family of Prospect and Palmer Houses," Princeton & Slavery, <https://slavery.princeton.edu/stories/the-potter-family-of-prospect-and-palmer-houses>; Kyra N. Pruszinski & Jolyon G. R. Pruszinski, "Trinity Church, Princeton and Slavery: A Brief Introduction," *Diocese of New Jersey Racial Justice Review*, March 25, 2023, https://www.academia.edu/103823645/Trinity_Church_Princeton_and_Slavery_A_Brief_Introduction?uc-sb-sw=20261829; Episcopal News Service, "New Jersey Reparations Commission offers a 'stations of reparations' liturgy," <https://www.episcopalnewsservice.org/2023/03/29/new-jersey-reparations-commission-offers-a-stations-of-reparations-liturgy/>; "Trinity Church, Princeton, and Slavery," *Diocese of New Jersey Racial Justice Review*, April 10, 2023, <https://dionj-racialjusticereview.blogspot.com>.

⁸ Henningsen, "Potter Family."

⁹ Woody Register and Benjamin King, "A Research Summary on Slavery and Race at the University of the South and in the Community of Sewanee," The Roberson Project, <https://new.sewanee.edu/roberson-project/landingpagearchive/learn-more/research-summary/>.

heirs, has been digitized by JML.¹⁰ This will also name several Potter family members, members of related families, and witnesses who may be related. For a list of these individuals, see Appendix B.

Thomas Fuller Potter was the fourth son and youngest child of John and Catherine. Born in 1806, he had five children with wives Lydia Jenkins and Sarah Jane Hall. Thomas died in 1853 and is buried at Trinity Church, as are his parents. The Princeton University Art Museum holds portraits of Thomas, John, and Catherine in their digital collection.¹¹

Colerain & Tweedside Plantations¹²

In the early 1800s, John Potter consolidated several properties along the Savannah River into one contiguous tract of 3,000 acres. The consolidated tracts became known as the Colerain and Tweedside plantations, as explained below. The acreage was located along the Savannah River approximately seven miles northwest of Savannah, Georgia and eastward of Augustine Creek.

The history of the Colerain Plantation, and the plantations preceding it, was documented in a series produced by the Savannah Unit of the Georgia Writers Project for the Works Project Administration in Georgia. The articles were published in 1940 and 1941 in the *Georgia Historical Quarterly*. The series details ownership of Colerain lands dating from original grants issued by the British Crown to Cornelius Sandford, John Williams, Robert Williams, and Patrick Talifer in the 1730s.¹³ A map of the Potter plantation lands was included in the series of four articles about the plantation (Fig. 1).

All of the original land grants, plus more than 700 acres on Onslow Island, were consolidated into a larger, connected estate controlled by John Potter and his sons.¹⁴ Through a series of acquisitions and lawsuits, the Potter Estate came to include plantations known as Colerain, Tweedside, Onslow, Grange (the Cowpen), Springfield, Argyle, Upper Annandale (Porcher's), Landiloe, and Clifton. Many of these parcels had been working plantations cultivating rice, cotton, and indigo. The Potters were the most economically successful of the owners, converting the land to high-yield rice farming by the mid-1800s.

¹⁰ James Potter, "Will of James Potter," JML Digital Collections, <https://digitaljones.omeka.net/items/show/622>.

¹¹ "John Potter," "Catherine Fuller Potter (Mrs. John Potter)," and "Thomas Fuller Potter (1806-1853), ca. 1851," Princeton University Art Museum, <https://artmuseum.princeton.edu/collections/objects/32411>; <https://artmuseum.princeton.edu/collections/objects/32341>; and <https://artmuseum.princeton.edu/collections/objects/55147>.

¹² In this article and dataset, the term "estate" refers to legal documents for the transfer of property and enslaved persons by free persons and enslavers. The term "plantation" and the place names "Colerain" and "Tweedside" refer to the physical location of lands along the Savannah River owned by John Potter (1765-1849) and his heirs.

¹³ Savannah Unit, Georgia Writers' Project, Work Projects Administration in Georgia, "Colerain Plantation. Part I," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (1940): 344, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40576751>.

¹⁴ Savannah Unit, Georgia Writers' Project, Work Projects Administration in Georgia, "Colerain Plantation. Part III," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (1941): 120-121.



Fig. 1: Map depicting the Potter family plantations, Colerain and Tweedside, with antecedent plantation names on the Savannah River in Chatham County, GA. Savannah River Plantations, Savannah Writers' Project, ed. Mary Granger (Georgia Historical Society, 1947).

John Potter died in 1849. Upon John's death, his sons divided the estate into two main parcels. James Potter inherited most of the Colerain property and Thomas Potter inherited the Tweedside property. Both sons died before the Emancipation Proclamation was enacted; Thomas died in 1853 and James in 1862.

Tweedside School House, mentioned in Freedmen's Bureau records, was located on the Tweedside Plantation. Despite being one of the largest Savannah River plantations, it appears that enslaved persons residing on the Potter lands may not have received reparations under Special Field Order 15. In 1865, the Colerain plantation was rented to General George P. Harrison, who owned Monteith Plantation. Harrison set up sharecropping on the land.¹⁵ After the Civil War, farming yields declined significantly. By 1899, James Potter's son-in-law John D. Langhorne was auctioning off portions of the Colerain and Tweedside lands.¹⁶ In the early 1900s, the Potter Estate reverted to a series of small parcels divided up for industrial use.

Today the former Potter plantation lands are utilized by entities that include the Savannah Hilton Head International Airport, an Amazon.com distribution center, Georgia Tech's Savannah Campus, the headquarters for the Georgia Ports Authority, International Paper's Port Wentworth

¹⁵ Savannah Unit, Georgia Writers' Project, Work Projects Administration in Georgia. "Colerain Plantation. Part IV," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (1941): 229-230.

¹⁶ "Sales Were Rather Slow," *Savannah Morning News*, December 06, 1899, p 3, col. 1, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/852573103/?match=1&terms=tweedside>.

Mill, and U.S. Sugar's Port Wentworth Refinery (formerly Imperial Sugar, site of a 2008 refinery explosion that killed 14 workers and injured 36). The land also includes parts of the U. S. Savannah Wildlife Refuge.

Dataset

The dataset documents uniquely identified individuals living on what was one of the largest Savannah River rice plantations in the state of Georgia between 1811 and 1856. There are numerous instances where individuals, in particular enslavers, appear in multiple documents within these papers. With the exception of members of the Potter family, we have chosen to assign Unique ID numbers sequentially across the entire dataset to allow researchers to draw their own connections about individuals and relationships, rather than suggest that they might be the same person. Thus, there are 1,140 Unique IDs in the dataset.

Appendix A lists the documents included in the dataset by type. This table specifies which members of the Potter family each document relates to and includes the location where the document was filed. The table is intended to aid researchers who want to trace the transfer of enslaved persons between Potter family members over time and across legal jurisdiction.

Unique ID numbers were assigned beginning with John Potter. The first document linked with ID numbers is John Potter's 1839 will. Unique ID numbers were assigned using the following formula:

<u>Institutional identifier</u>	<u>Manuscript identifier</u>	<u>4-digit Person identifier</u>
JML	MS1141	0001

Minda Campbell Family

The oldest document in the dataset is an 1811 "Deed of Gift from Sarah Jones to Sarah Jones Grimes" and documents nine individuals. Persons assigned Unique IDs JMLMS11411129 to JMLMS11411137 appear towards the end of the dataset. The 1811 deed specifies the transfer of an enslaved woman, Minda (aka Menda) Campbell, from Sarah Jones to her granddaughter, Sarah Jones Grimes (1808-1847). Sarah Jones Grimes later married James Potter, at which point Minda and her children came to be listed as James' property.

Menda is believed to be Minda Campbell, mother of Thomas Sims (ca 1828-1902). Thomas was a bricklayer enslaved by James Potter. In 1851, Thomas escaped from Savannah to Boston, Massachusetts, only to be forcibly returned to Potter several months later under the Fugitive Slave Act.¹⁷

¹⁷ National Park Service, "The Whole Land is Full of Blood": The Thomas Sims Case. (2023), <https://www.nps.gov/articles/-the-whole-land-is-full-of-blood-the-thomas-sims-case.html>; Robert Rantoul, Thomas Sims, James Potter, Charles G Loring, George Ticknor Curtis, and James W Stone, "Trial of Thomas Sims, on an issue of personal liberty, on the claim of James Potter, of Georgia, against him, as an alleged fugitive from service: arguments of Robert Rantoul, Jr., and Charles G. Loring, with the decision of George T. Curtis, Boston, April 7-11" (Wm. S. Damrell & Co., 1851) <https://www.loc.gov/item/37031135>; Julia de Chantal, Heidi Moye, and Anastatia Sims, "African Americans at Fort Pulaski, 1733–1900: A Special History Study," (Organization of American Historians and National Park Service, April 2022),

Dates of Data Collection

2024

Dataset Languages

English

Geographic Coverage

Chatham County, Georgia, United States
Colerain Plantation, Georgia, United States
Tweedside Plantation, Georgia, United States
City of Lynchburg, Virginia, United States

Temporal Coverage

1811 - 1856

Document Types

Wills
Inventories
Bills of Sale
Deeds of Gift

Sources

"Potter Estate Papers." Manuscript Collection 1141. Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, VA.

Jones Memorial Library Digital Collections

Cooper, J.J. "Lands and Negroes Estate of T.F. Potter list."

<https://digital.jmlibrary.org/s/collections/item/1288#lg=1&slide=0>.

Davis, Martha, and Samuel Philbrick. "Bargain and Sale by Thomas Potter."

<https://digital.jmlibrary.org/s/collections/item/1285#lg=1&slide=0>.

Davis, J. "Bill of Sale to James Potter."

<https://digital.jmlibrary.org/s/collections/item/1280#lg=1&slide=0>.

Fuller, Thomas. "Bill of Sale to James Potter for Abraham."

<https://digital.jmlibrary.org/s/collections/item/1278#lg=1&slide=0>.

George M. Jones Memorial Library. "Finding aid to the Potter Estate Papers."

<https://digital.jmlibrary.org/s/collections/item/353#lg=1&slide=0>.

Jones, Sarah. "Sarah Jones Deed of Gift to Grimes."

<https://digital.jmlibrary.org/s/collections/item/1273#lg=1&slide=0>.

<https://www.nps.gov/fopu/learn/historyculture/upload/African-Americans-at-Fort-Pulaski-Special-History-Study.pdf>; and Tiffany Harte, "Voices of Freedom." Atlanta History Center, June 14, 2022, <https://www.atlantahistorycenter.com/blog/voices-of-freedom/>.

- Langhorne, John Duval. "John D. Langhorne Sale of Tweedside Plantation."
<https://digital.jmlibrary.org/s/collections/item/1291#lg=1&slide=0>.
- Olmstead, George P., and Phillip Hendrickson. "Thomas Potter Inventory."
<https://digital.jmlibrary.org/s/collections/item/1286#lg=1&slide=0>.
- Potter, John. "Will of John Potter."
<https://digital.jmlibrary.org/s/collections/item/1306#lg=1&slide=0>.
- Potter, James. "Letter of Attorney Robert F Stockton to James Potter."
<https://digital.jmlibrary.org/s/collections/item/1279#lg=1&slide=0>.
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<https://digital.jmlibrary.org/s/collections/item/1305#lg=1&slide=0>.
- Potter, Thomas. "Will of Thomas Potter."
<https://digital.jmlibrary.org/s/collections/item/1287#lg=1&slide=0>.
- Rankin, Madeline J., and Cornelia W. Beckwith. "Bills of Sale to James Potter."
<https://digital.jmlibrary.org/s/collections/item/1290#lg=1&slide=0>.
- Stockton, B.F. "Will and Indenture of Thomas Potter."
<https://digital.jmlibrary.org/s/collections/item/1289#lg=1&slide=0>.
- William, John. "John William sale document."
<https://digital.jmlibrary.org/s/collections/item/1281#lg=1&slide=0>.
- Wyll, Elisha. "Bill of Sale to James Potter."
<https://digital.jmlibrary.org/s/collections/item/1283#lg=1&slide=0>.

Methodology

Data for the Potter Estate dataset was compiled from Jones Memorial Library Manuscript Collection 1141. The collection spans fifteen folders across three boxes. The dataset was created from 15 of 16 documents within the collection. These fifteen documents, created by different members of the Potter family, span from 1811 to 1856 and include wills, inventories, bills of sale, deeds, and a letter. The is in English. It contains 1,140 rows of information with 30 fields. Fields are only populated when corresponding information is available from a document.

Process

In 2023, library interns and volunteers reviewed the Library's finding aids to identify potential collections with materials from former plantations in Virginia and across the American South. Manuscript 1141: The Potter Estate Papers was identified as a collection containing original documents naming numerous enslaved persons.

Library staff and volunteers reviewed materials in the collection and flagged documents that referenced enslaved persons. These documents were then digitally scanned and uploaded to a shared Google Drive for further evaluation.

In Fall 2023, the Library applied to participate as a host site for a short-term internship with Oberlin College's Winter Term program.

The 15 documents included in the dataset were imaged in color using a CZUR ET18 Pro scanner and uploaded to the Library's Omeka digital collection platform. A small team composed of Smith, Glover, JML archivist Gwen Wells, and volunteer Steven Brown then asynchronously

transcribed the content of each resource from the Potter Papers. Glover created the initial dataset in Excel to record the names of enslaved people and enslavers. Final edits to transcriptions were subsequently made by Brown.

Every name was entered as it appeared in the documents; unusual spellings or characters after names are from the original documents. All persons are listed in the order they appeared in the documents; infants may be listed near parents or other family members. Additional information the documents provided—such as a person’s age, occupation, skills, location, or other notes—were transcribed along with their name. The names and information were then transferred from the transcriptions to the Excel spreadsheet.

Some people in the dataset had names that were fully or partially illegible. Others were unnamed or left blank in the documents themselves. When unsure about spelling, we included an alternate name(s). Brackets and dashes indicate uncertainty and missing information as in this example:

<u>First name</u>	<u>Alternate first name</u>
Juno	June
Loucy	Lucy
Statia	[Stat-a]
[J---]	[illegible]
[illegible]	Unknown
Paul	[Gary], [Sary]

We used the term “unknown” to indicate an illegible, or absent, first name or middle name. We did not list surnames if we did not have reasonable certainty about the name. Unnamed infants who were just weeks or months old at the time that they were documented were listed as [Infant] and assigned an alternate first name as “Unknown”:

<u>First name</u>	<u>Alternate first name</u>
[Infant]	Unknown

Unnamed infant twins were entered as individuals; each twin was given their own identification number despite the fact that they are written as one unit in the original documents. When a description indicates a multiple number of individuals, but it is unclear as to the exact number of persons, one Unique ID number was assigned.

<u>First name</u>	<u>Alternate first name</u>
[Infant twin 1]	Unknown
[Infant twin 2]	Unknown
[Family of Alonzo]	Unknown

We did not assign surnames to individuals when the person did not appear to have been listed with one. In cases where an enslaved family was sold together but was not traceable with a surname, we assigned a surname to help identify members. For example, Rose [Unique ID JMLMS114110562] was a thirty-eight-year-old enslaved woman, sold with three children named George, Henry and Billy. The family has been assigned a surname of “[Rose family]”:

<u>First name</u>	<u>Last name</u>
Rose	[Rose family]
George	[Rose family]
Henry	[Rose family]
Billy	[Rose family]

Alonzo and his wife and family were sold together in 1839:

<u>First name</u>	<u>Alternate name</u>	<u>Surname</u>
Alonzo		[Alonzo family]
[Wife of Alonzo]	Unknown	[Alonzo family]
[Family of Alonzo]	Unknown	[Alonzo family]

In some instances, abbreviations of names were listed in the document. When the abbreviation was standard, or when we have been able to further confirm the individual's identity, we included a full name as the alternate:

<u>First name</u>	<u>Alternate first name</u>	<u>Surname</u>
Geo S.	George S.	Owens

There are a few instances where an individual's name included what seems to be a nickname, occupation, description, or other term. For these we assigned an alternate name:

<u>First name</u>	<u>Alternate first name</u>
Carpenter Toney	Toney
Bahama Jim	Jim
Old Eve	Eve

In cases where a name might reasonably include an occupation, we assigned an alternate first name and an occupation:

<u>First name</u>	<u>Alternate first name</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
Carpenter Toney	Toney	Carpenter
Old Nanny	Nanny	Nanny
Old Boatswain	Boatswain	Boatswain

In cases where an individual may be listed by a combination of a first name with a middle name, or a first name with a surname, we listed a first and middle name combination as an alternate name:

<u>First name</u>	<u>Alternate first name</u>	<u>Surname</u>
Pompey	Pompey Price	Price
Pompey	Pompey Gates	Gates

Enslavers and Related Persons: Unique IDs & Person Roles

Many non-enslaved persons listed in the dataset are related and appear in multiple contexts. In one document an individual may serve as a witness to a transaction, while in another they are a beneficiary. Given the interconnections of the Potter family members and their multiple roles, we have enumerated persons who held a ruling status in any of the documents primarily in the Enslaver role. We added a secondary role to provide additional context regarding that person's status within an individual document.

Enslavers and related individuals who appear across multiple documents by first name and surname have been assigned a Unique ID number that repeats across the dataset. This is because we have reasonable certainty about their identity, due to the use of full names and their representation in published biographical resources.

Understanding family relationships became essential for record context. For this reason, we have included family trees as Appendix B. The family trees are not intended to be comprehensive.

Enslaved Family Groupings: Unique IDs & Relationships

Most enslaved persons in the Potter Estate documents are not listed with surnames. There are several individuals who share the same first name. We have chosen to assign a Unique ID number for enslaved persons at each mention across the documents. Researchers should keep in mind that the same enslaved individual may therefore appear across the dataset under different Unique IDs. When we have reasonable certainty that an enslaved person may be listed under a different Unique ID number within the dataset, we have added the other Unique ID number(s) in the Notes column. We invite researchers to submit clarifications as additional information is discovered about individuals.

Most of the documents in this dataset list enslaved persons without reference to family groupings. However, it seems likely that enslaved individuals were listed next to family members. Researchers are encouraged to consider that enslaved persons with adjacent Unique ID numbers may be related and to compare the Notes columns for additional Unique ID numbers that may elucidate relationships.

The one exception where we felt certainty about relationships between enslaved persons was in the document "Lands and Negroes, Est. of T. F. Potter." This document is an 1853 inventory of persons enslaved by Thomas Potter. It appears to record family groupings using a column and dash system.¹⁸ The list includes columns for "Numbers" and "Number in Family." The Numbers column was used to assign sequential IDs. The Number in Family column appears to record the total number of enslaved persons who formed their own family unit. The last member of each family grouping was indicated by a system of dashes, as in this example:

Family grouping 1:

[ID 1] Richard
[ID 2] Susan
[ID 3] [Number in family 3] -- Robert -----

Family grouping 2:

[ID 4] Jno. Lee

¹⁸ J. T. Cooper, "Lands and Negroes Estate of T.F. Potter list," JML Digital Collections, <https://digital.jmlibrary.org/s/collections/item/1288#lg=1&slide=0>. This inventory was presumably conducted for purposes of settling Thomas's estate after his death in September 1853. It is assumed to be a companion document to the "Thomas Potter Inventory," which lists household goods and personal effects, and pre-dates the 1854 document, "Will and Indenture of Thomas Potter."

[ID 5] Lucy Voss
[ID 6] Zeline
[ID 7] [Number in family 4] -- Jonas - - - - -

Family groupings from the “Lands and Negroes, Est. of T. F. Potter” document have been connected using the Relationships field in the dataset. It seems likely that many of these groupings are nuclear families of parents and children. However, we leave those interpretations to researchers. To express uncertainty about the exact relationships, we have used the term “Relative” instead of the more precise “Spouse,” “Child,” “Parent,” or “Sibling.” For these families, we have also added a bracketed alternate surname when no surname is listed. An entry for Family Grouping 1 above appears in the dataset as:

Firstname	Alternate surname	Relationship
Richard	[Richard family]	Relative Susan UniqueID; Relative Robert UniqueID
Susan	[Richard family]	Relative Richard UniqueID; Relative Robert UniqueID
Robert	[Richard family]	Relative Richard UniqueID; Relative Susan UniqueID

We have included a list of the family groupings from the document “Lands and Negroes, Est. of T. F. Potter” in Appendix C.

Date of Publication

September 2025

Data Links

Dataset Repository: Harvard Dataverse, <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/PQKAN3>

Linked Data Representation: [Enslaved.org](https://enslaved.org)

Cite this Article

Smith, Deborah A. "The Potter Estate: Colerain & Tweedside Plantations, 1811-1856." *Journal of Slavery and Data Preservation* 6, no. 3 (2025): 161-172. <http://doi.org/10.14321/jsdp.6.3.0161>.

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