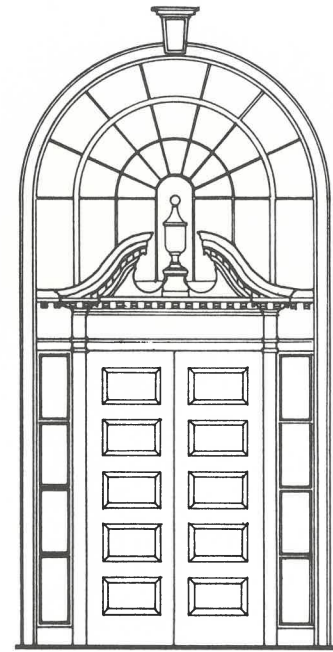


The Magazine of
ALBEMARLE COUNTY
H · I · S · T · O · R · Y



Volume Fifty-Eight
▪ 2000 ▪

Albemarle County Historical Society
The McIntire Building
200 Second Street, NE

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22902

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Front Cover Illustration: Slave sale advertisement, *Charlottesville Advocate*, 16 March 1860.

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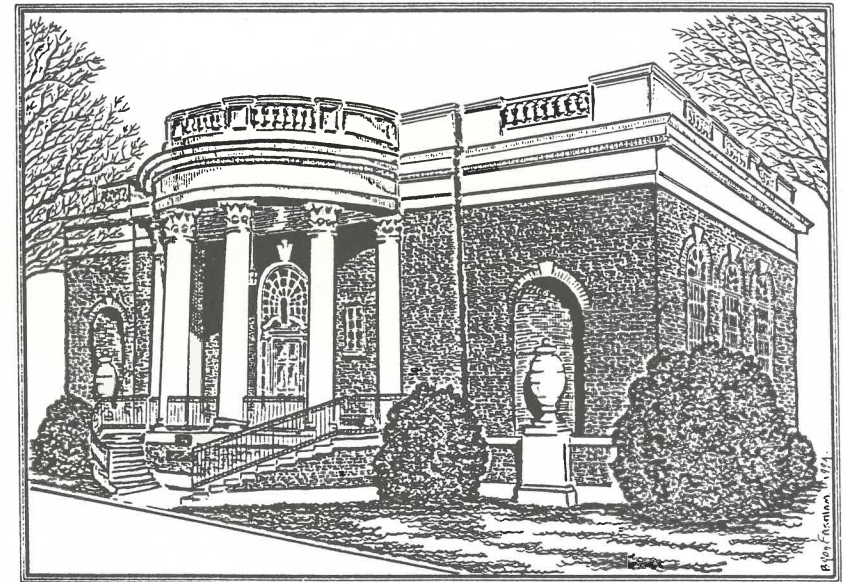
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Slave sale advertisement, *Charlottesville Advocate*, 16 March 1860.

Site of Slave Block?

BY GAYLE M. SCHULMAN

One of the things I remember from my first guided walking tour of Charlottesville's Historic Court Square area was seeing a slate sign, "Site of Slave Block," attached to a building called "Number Nothing."¹ It evoked strong images and complex feelings in me. Later I learned that a large stone at this location, similar to ones identified as slave blocks in other communities, formerly rested beneath a fading sign for "BENSON AND BRO. AUCTION ROOMS." People told me of two conjectures about this site: first, that it was where slave traders brought in slaves from the country to sell in Charlottesville; second, that auctioneers, notably the

1. Ervin L. Jordan, Jr., encouraged me to pursue this research, and Phillip D. Troutman suggested readings to increase my understanding of slave auctions. My thanks to them and to Melinda Frierson, Lucia Stanton and Edward L. Ayers.

James Alexander, *Early Charlottesville: Recollections of James Alexander 1828-1874*, ed. Mary Rawlings (Charlottesville, 1942), 19. Mary Rawlings notes Mr. Homan W. Walsh recalling that a stone 18 inches high by 15 inches wide by 30 inches was at the curb on the south side of No. 0 when he worked there as a young lawyer in 1906. The stone was removed during road work early in this century. There is no mark placing this stone on a Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Charlottesville, Va. (Sanborn Perris Map Co.) [New York, 1896 and 1920] and no note of it has yet been found in other sources or photographs. (A photo in the Holsinger collection shows the nearby Colonial Hotel with a stone at its front door that seems appropriate for stepping out of a coach). Mary Rawlings summarized "we may infer that all auctions were conducted here, and thus when slaves were brought in, their dealers made use of these facilities." The No. 0 site was purchased on 15 June 1820 by Opie Norris and John C. Ragland. Alexander's recollections imply that a building was on the site while Thomas Jefferson was alive, but others date its construction to 1828 or later.

Benson brothers, sold slaves from No. 0.

To address these speculations, and to gain a wider view of the nineteenth-century slave trade in Charlottesville, I searched manuscripts, broadsides and newspapers for evidence on the local buying and selling of slaves, giving special attention to the Benson brothers. I noted the advertised locations and reasons given for slave sales in local newspapers, from the first issue in 1820 to beyond the end of the Civil War in 1865.² Reading these documents cannot fail to remind us that enslaved people were considered to be property—assets to be bought and sold or used as collateral to borrow money. This legal, social and economic reality was assumed by many generations before the documents reviewed here were recorded.³

Newspaper advertisements seem to indicate that several people in Albemarle County may have made their primary income as local slave traders. Robert M. Clarke, who advertised his slave yard on Whitehall Street in the Charlottesville *Daily Chronicle*, at first glance appears to have been one of them:

2. Scattered issues of local newspapers may be read from microfilms identified as VA-5 and VA-48. The advertisements below show the diversity, but not frequency of a particular type of ad. Frequently the same ad appeared in successive issues. All advertisements found for the Benson Brothers are included; notices of “Slaves for Hire” are not.

3. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts passed laws on slavery twenty years before Virginia, but by 1705 Virginia law labeled slaves as “Real Estate.” The law was modified in 1727 and 1748 to state clearly that slaves were to be taxed as personal property or “chattel” (see June Purcell Guild, *Black Laws of Virginia* [1936, reprint, Fauquier County, Va., 1996], unnumbered p., 48, 53, 55). Virginia prohibited further importation of slaves from Africa in 1778 and a similar United States law was enacted in 1808, but until penalties became severe, the anti-importation laws were often ignored. As the nation expanded to the southwest and the cultivation of sugar cane and cotton crops increased, more workers were needed. A profitable domestic slave trade developed to satisfy these demands for labor.

Friday, 19 February 1864

SLAVE YARD, BY ROBERT M. CLARKE.

On the west side of Whitehall street, who has a commodious, well arranged Yard, with every convenience for the health and comfort of slaves. Constantly kept on hand for sale a large number of *Mechanics, Coachmen, Cooks, House Servants, And Field Hands.*

BUYS AND SELLS ON COMMISSION.

By close personal attention to business he hopes to receive a liberal patronage.

Whitehall Road, an early name for Preston Avenue, led from Charlottesville toward Whitehall in western Albemarle.⁴ A second look at this newspaper, however, indicates that Clarke's activities were not based locally. Four similar advertisements in the newspaper just above this one were from Atlanta. One of them, H. Joiner & Son, Commission Merchants, advertised their office and warehouse in Keystone Block, Whitehall St., Atlanta, Georgia. A letter to the Atlanta History Center confirmed that the 1859 Atlanta City Directory included Robert M. Clarke in a wholesale and retail grocery business on the west side of Whitehall between Alabama and Hunter Streets.⁵ For an Atlanta slave yard owner to advertise in a Charlottesville paper suggests some connections to local people as well as a continued interest in, and need for, Virginia slaves even late in the War when prices were inflated. For example, in December 1864 the Richmond slave traders Dickinson

4. Edgar Woods, *Albemarle County in Virginia* (1901, reprint, Bowie, Md., 1991), 288, 340, 334, 361.

5. Personal correspondence from Helen Matthews, Reference Archivist at the Atlanta History Center, 130 West Paces Ferry Road, NW Atlanta, Ga., 30305-1366. Ms. Matthews provided an article containing the following quote from an Atlanta paper: “Robert M. Clarke kept a ‘commodious well arranged Yard, with every convenience for the health and comfort of slaves.’ A large number were ‘constantly kept on hand for sale’” (Robert Gibbons, “Life at the Crossroads of the Confederacy: Atlanta, 1861–1865,” *Atlanta Historical Society Journal*, 23 [1979], 38).

and Hill sold men for \$5,300 each, a boy for \$4,650 and a girl for \$5,225.⁶

One local person who may have both sold and purchased enslaved people in Charlottesville was James Brady of Scottsville. By 1830 Mr. Brady was settled in Albemarle with his wife and two young children. According to the 1850 Census he was a 47 year old saddler owning real estate valued at \$6,000.⁷ His papers reveal his activities in the 1840s and 1850s, not only as a saddler and merchant but as a slave trader.⁸ Correspondence in this collection from Richmond slave businesses, such as Pulliam and Davis, and R. H. Dickinson and Brother, listed current prices of slaves including "No. 1 men" and "likely and well made boys." With Mr. Brady receiving regular listings of prices from slave traders, it is likely that he bought locally for resale in the Richmond slave market. This is consistent with the research of scholars on the "outmigration" of slaves from Virginia, from the Piedmont region, and from Albemarle County.⁹ Although the archive of James Brady's papers includes no separate ledger, both purchases and sales of individuals are clear. Evidence that Brady sold enslaved

6. Robert Harold Gudmestad, "The Richmond Slave Market," 1840–1860 (M.A. thesis, University of Richmond, 1993), 116, citing the Lucy Chase Papers.

7. James Brady does not appear in the 1860 Census, but his wife resided with their son, William Brady. William listed "tavern keeper" as his occupation. Virginia Moore, in her *Scottsville on the James* (Richmond, 1994), writes that William Brady started a Scottsville newspaper in 1870 (pp. 99, 104). However, he does not appear in the 1870 Census in Albemarle or with his wife in Fluvanna County.

8. Harris-Brady Papers, Accession #38-597, University of Virginia Archives, Alderman Library. Portions of the collection dealing with slave matters are available on microfilm (micfilm 1705, series E, part 1, reel 38).

9. Phillip Troutman's clear graphs and maps summarizing data on the movement of slaves away from Virginia can be seen on his internet site: <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/slavetrade/home.html>.

people while he was in Charlottesville may someday be found scattered in records of families, businesses or plantations.

In reading the Brady papers one gets glimpses into a variety of personal situations. One correspondent wanted to exchange a girl slave for a boy or old man, or, if that was not possible, to sell the girl. A note to Brady from George Christopher Gilmer of "Buckeyeland" in Albemarle County reveals another slave predicament, and also something about Gilmer's relationship with his slaves, as well as his strategy for obtaining a good price.¹⁰

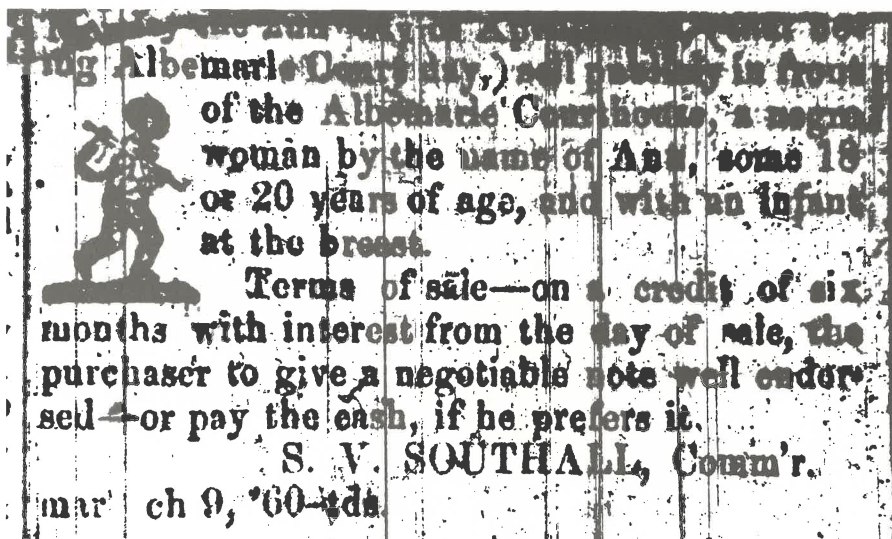
Mr Jas Brady
Dr Sir

Oct 23d 1852

Dr Minor wishes to buy Caroline from my description of Her. He will be out at Sam P Mayo's Sale and requested me to get Her out So He could See Her on Tuesday next so I have sent Her Father down for Her and if Minor does not take Her I will send Her Back on next Saturday night or Sunday. write me your price and if it is possible I will dispose of Her for you. I Should like to get Her near Her Father & Mother who I own. Dr. Minor wants Her for his own use not to sell again yours most Sincerely

Geo. C. Gilmer

10. Harris-Brady Papers, Accession #38-597, University of Virginia Archives, Alderman Library, Charlottesville. "Dr. Minor" may refer to Dr. James Hunter Minor of the Albemarle estate "Music Hall."



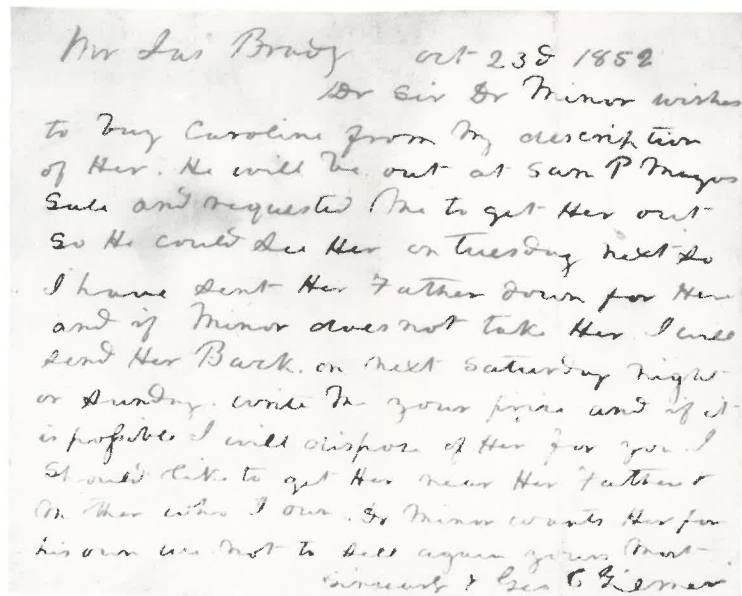
ing Albemarle County, Va,) will publicly in front
of the Albemarle Courthouse, a negro
woman by the name of Ann, some 18
or 20 years of age, and with an infant
at the breast.

Terms of sale—on a credit of six
months with interest from the day of sale, the
purchaser to give a negotiable note well endor-
sed—or pay the cash, if he prefers it.

S. V. SOUTHALL, Comm'r.

mar' ch 9, '60—tds.

Charlottesville Advocate, 16 March 1860.



Mr Jas Brady Oct 23d 1852
Mr Sir Mr Minor wishes
to buy Caroline from my description
of her. He will be out at Sam P Mayes
Sale and requested me to get her out
so he could see her on Tuesday next so
I have sent her father down for her
and if Minor does not take her I will
send her back on next Saturday night
or Sunday. write to your friend and if it
is profitable I will dispose of her for you I
should like to get her near her father
on her own I own. So Minor wants her for
his own we must to sell again yours most
sincerely G. C. Gilmer

George C. Gilmer to James Brady, 23 October 1852. Harris-Brady
Papers, University of Virginia Archives, Alderman Library.

SLAVE SITE

Another slave, Maria Perkins, wrote to her husband Richard Perkins on Oct 8, 1852, just four days after the first day of the October term of the Albemarle County Court:

Dear Husband[,]

I write you a letter to let you know of my distress. My master has sold Albert to a trader on Monday court day and myself and other child is for sale also . . . I want you to tell Dr Hamilton or your master if either will buy me they can attend to it now . . . I don't want a trader to get me . . . A man by the name of Brady bought Albert and is gone I don't know where. They say he lives in Scottsville . . . Tell I am quite heart sick. Nothing more. I am and ever will be your kind wife,

Maria Perkins.¹¹

Hand written and printed receipts, while not as detailed or evocative as correspondence, document Brady's purchase of slaves. At the Sept. 6, 1852 court day, Brady paid \$575 to buy "Bill Minor." Trade circulars and reports in May 1853 valued a "Bes Boy 10-14 years old" at \$450-\$950.¹² Another of James Brady's receipts is \$16.00 for a mahogany bedstead paid to "Benson & Bro." on June 5, 1854—"Court Day." This confirms that Mr. Brady had some business dealings with these merchants and auctioneers in Charlottesville.

What about the business of the Benson family, previously mentioned as slave auctioneers in Charlottesville? John B. Benson

11. A search of the 1870 Virginia census and of an electronic listing of people identified as mulatto or black in the national census of 1870, did not locate members of this Perkins family. A complete transcription and image of this letter can be read on the world wide web at <http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/vshadow2/perkins.html>.

12. Michael Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South* (Madison, 1996), 289.

and Christiana Yates Day married in Fredericksburg.¹³ In 1821 John and his wife (also known as Catherine or Kitty) sold merchandise as varied as furniture, brown sugar, green coffee and a few gallons of Old Madeira wine from a store on Charlottesville's Main Street.¹⁴ Their son, Henry Benson, attended the school of Rev. F. W. Hatch and Thomas Walker Maury. In 1836 Henry Benson had his own store on the south side of Random Row (now West Main Street).¹⁵

In the 1850 U.S. Census Henry's younger brother Alfred listed "Auctioneer" as his employment, but Henry Benson did not specify his work. When the new Town Hall opened in 1852, Henry Benson served as the rental agent. Both Alfred and Henry called themselves "Auctioneers" in the 1860 Census, but the earliest advertisement I found for their business is 1864.¹⁶ According to R. T. W. Duke, Jr., when he was a boy in the 1860s the Bensons lived on the southwest corner of High Street and 4th Street NE while

13. The marriage took place on 3 Feb. 1813 (Therese A. Fisher ed., *Marriage Records of the City of Fredericksburg, and of Orange, Spotsylvania, and Stafford Counties, Virginia, 1722-1850* [Bowie, Md., 2d ed., 1990], 13). Her father, Benjamin Day, purchased a half-acre lot (Lot 34, on Main Street at the corner of 3rd SE) in Charlottesville with a store dwelling and other buildings. Mr. Day purchased the lot from William Huntington on 30 August 1820 for "six hundred and sixty six and two third dollars of lawful money" (Albemarle County Deed Book, no. 22, p. 224). His daughter inherited the property from him (*ibid.*, No. 37, p. 458).

14. Charlottesville *Central Gazette*, 6 July 1821. They also took in young gentlemen as boarders (*Virginia Advocate*, 17 September 1830).

15. Alexander, *Early Charlottesville*, 64, 92.

16. June Purcell Guild, in her *Black Laws of Virginia* (1936; reprint, Fauquier County, Virginia 1996), notes that chapter 2 of the 1860 code states: "No person shall without license buy for sale or sell for others on commission slaves, horses, mules, cattle, sheep or hogs" (p. 91). Other tax laws contained similar provisions. Such licenses for Albemarle County have not yet been located.

operating an auction business in No. 0.¹⁷ No records have been found that the Bensons owned either location, so we may assume that both were rented. We do not know when they began or ended their occupancy of No. 0.¹⁸ According to James Alexander, by 1874 Henry lived on Park Street and had his auction business at Main between 2nd and 3rd.¹⁹

Records of the Benson auction business have not been identified, nor have broadsides of sales that they may have conducted. We only have their advertisements from amongst the others reprinted here, all from local newspapers.²⁰

17. Gayle M. Schulman, ed., "Recollections of Judge R. T. W. Duke, Jr.," *Magazine of Albemarle County History*, 52 (1994), 114, 117, 119. Judge Duke described Henry Benson as a famous auctioneer, one of the wittiest men he knew, and the auctioneer when the Duke family purchased its farm, "Sunny Side," in 1863 for \$6,000.

18. In the 1860 Census Catherine Y. Benson, aged 71, reported owning personal property valued at \$6,000. The slave census for 1860 showed that she owned six slaves living in one slave house. One of them was a three-year-old mulatto girl named Margaret Hailstock Terry. Part of her story is recorded in Charles L. Perdue, Jr., Thomas E. Barden, and Robert K. Phillips, eds., *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves* (Charlottesville, 1976), 285: "I am the daughter of Nancy and George Hailstock, born October 25, 1857. We were the slaves of Alfred Benson, who lived on High Street, Charlottesville, Virginia. They were kind to their slaves as a rule, but I can remember one time mother and her mistress had a fight. Well, I was a good size girl, had been out playing. I came running into the room to ask mother something, and when I opened the door, I saw my mother standing up with her hair all over her head, and this old woman knocking and beating her . . . That was the only time I had ever seen them whip my mother.

"Mother's old mistress some how didn't like me because she just couldn't make me call her mistress. No, I never would; always called her Miss Kitty."

19. Alexander, *Early Charlottesville*, 80.

20. I noted in my earlier article, "The Gibbons Family: Freedmen," *Magazine of Albemarle County History*, 55 (1997), 60-93, that Henry Benson was one of the "white" residents under consideration to become a magistrate during

The Charlottesville *Central Gazette*:

Saturday, 29 January 1820

NOTICE

WILL be sold on the 18th day of Feb. next, at the house of Mrs. Lucy W. Richards, for ready money 3 or 4 likely *Negroes*, Belonging to the estate of Benjamin Richards, deceased.

All those having claims against said estate, are solicited to bring them forward well authenticated, as arrangements may be made for their discharge.

FONTAINE RICHARDS.

M. W. D. JONES.

Adm. of B. Richards, dec.

□ □ □

Friday, 16 March 1821

For Sale,

A valuable woman and three boys; the woman about 25—the oldest of the children about 6—she is one of the best serving women in Virginia, being a good Cook, Seamstress, Washer, Ironer, &c. and comes recommended with a character unexceptionable. If not sold before April Court, they will then be offered at public auction before the Court House door for cash.

Apply to F. B. Dyer.²¹

Friday, 3 August 1821

Cabinet Furniture

The Subscriber has on hand an assortment of elegant CABINET FURNITURE, which consists in part of the following, viz: Mahogany Sideboards, Secretaries and Book-cases, Mahogany tables and Beureaux, High & Low-post Beadsteads, Wash-stands, and Walnut

Reconstruction (see n. 23, p. 70). This reference made me particularly curious about his work as an auctioneer and as a possible slave trader.

21. The brick Albemarle County Court House was built in 1803 when Jefferson was President and Lewis and Clark were getting ready to head west. The south portico section was added around 1859. No information is available about the appearance of the door or steps to the court house before the addition. Mr. Dyer was a lawyer.

SLAVE SITE

Furniture of every description, all of which will be sold very low for cash, young *Negroes*, or good bonds.

WASHINGTON CHILES.

□ □ □

Friday, 26 July 1822

Negroes for Sale.

Will be sold according to law, without reserve, in the town of Charlottesville, on Monday the 5th of August, it being Court day, 20 Likely *Negroes*; said *negroes* being levied on by the Deputy Sheriff of Albemarle county, to satisfy sundry executions against the estate of Robert Lewis.

J. COFFMAN, C.A.C.

And Admr. of Robt. Lewis.²²

□ □ □

Saturday, 25 December 1824

Negroes for Sale.

I shall offer at public auction, on Albemarle February court day, before the door of the Swan Tavern, in Charlottesville, 18 or 20 likely *negroes*. So far as that relation subsists they will be sold in families. One fourth of the purchase money will be required in hand; on the balance a credit of twelve months will be given the purchaser giving bond with approved security.

FRANK CARR.

□ □ □

22. This advertisement points out two reasons for court sales: to settle debt owed the county and for probate of an estate. Perhaps in the future someone will review our local court-supervised slave sales to learn its extent and economic importance.

Saturday, 15 July 1826

Notice.

Will be sold to the highest bidder on the first day of August court next, at the Eagle Hotel in Charlottesville, three NEGROES, namely, man Jim, and his wife Luddy and their child Jennetta, being the Dower of Mrs. Elizabeth Wingfield, decd. on a credit of six months, the purchasers giving bond with approved security.

JOHN H. WINGFIELD. Admr.²³*The Virginia Advocate:*

Saturday, 1 September 1827

TRUST SALE OF NEGROES.

Will be sold to the highest bidder for ready money, before the front door of the Courthouse in Charlottesville, on monday the third day of September next, being Albemarle court day, under a deed of trust executed to the subscriber, to secure debts due to James D. Dillard guardian of Edward C. and Lucy M. Moore, so many of the slaves conveyed in said trust as may be necessary to satisfy the amount of said debts and the costs and charges of sale.

The title to the slaves is believed to be indisputable, but the subscriber will of course convey to the purchaser such title only, as is vested in him by the deed aforesaid.

Richard M. Chapman.

Orange Courthouse, August 4, 1827.

□ □ □

23. If in 1826 you stood on the front veranda of the Eagle Hotel looking out, you would be looking at the eastern side of the Court Square toward Number "0." The Greek Revival style brick building, now called 300 Court Square, replaced the Eagle Hotel in the 1850s.

SLAVE SITE

Saturday, 23 February 1828

FOR SALE,

A LIKELY Negro Man, twenty six years old, a good coarse Carpenter, a first rate hand in Harvest, and well disposed—ALSO, a Mulatto Boy, sixteen years old, accustomed to house business—neither sold for any fault.

Apply to James Miller.

□ □ □

Saturday, 3 May 1828

NOTICE.

BY virtue of a Deed of *Trust* from John Gray, Jr. to the subscriber, for the purposes therein mentioned, will be exposed for sale, before the door of Mr Garnett's tavern,²⁴ in the town of Charlottesville, on Thursday, the 5th day of June next, for Cash—SUNDRY SLAVES, Viz: RICHARD, a negro man; LAVINIA, and her young daughter; MOLLY, a girl; ROBERT, a boy; and EVELINA, a girl—with their increase since the 22d January, 1822.

Carter L. Stevenson.

□ □ □

Saturday, 3 May 1828

FOR SALE,

A SHOEMAKER, and as good as any in this place, to say of a man or color, Like wise the brick house that the present occupy, with a good kitchen, smoke house and oven attached to it; or the

24. George Garnett ran the Jefferson Hotel directly opposite the courthouse. The house was "95 by 40 feet, 4 stories high including the ground story, built of brick and covered with tin, and may therefore be considered as secure from fire, and finished inside in a neat and handsome manner contains 25 rooms above the ground story, including a very spacious dining room, ball-room, bar-room &c" (*Virginia Advocate*, 17 Jan. 1829). The Monticello Hotel, now 500 Court Square, replaced this structure in the 1920s.

entire of the house and lot on reasonable terms. There is a first rate well on the lot. Apply to the subscriber on the main street. I will give a credit in par of the above property, as I wish to pay my lawful debts.

M. CASEY.

□ □ □

Saturday, 13 December 1828

WILL be sold, on the FIRST OF JANUARY, in the town of Charlottesville, in front of the *Eagle Hotel*, THIRTY SLAVES, consisting of men, women and boys, among whom are several valuable tradesmen. The terms will be made known on the day of sale.

T. J. RANDOLPH,
Executor of THOMAS JEFFERSON, deceased.²⁵

25. "in front of the *Eagle Hotel*" is very close to the supposed "Site of Slave Block." This advertisement covered the sale of more people than any other found in the local newspapers. Printed below this advertisement was another for the residue of Jefferson's estate. A notice for the earlier sale of slaves at Monticello appeared in the *Charlottesville Central Gazette*, 13 January 1827 and is reproduced on p. 94 of Lucia Stanton's article on the early local slave community, "Monticello to Main Street: The Hemings Family and Charlottesville," *Magazine of Albemarle County History*, 55 (1997), 94-126.

An accounting of the sale held 1 Jan. 1829 shows \$8,390 paid to Jefferson's estate. Ten slaves were purchased by T. J. Randolph, six by William Garland and most of the remaining by local residents including John M. Perry, John D. Craven. Some moved to the university community with professors George Blaetterman and Robley Duglison and the proctor, Arthur S. Brockenbrough (Thomas Jefferson Randolph, Taylor Smith, and Nicholas families, Accession #8937, An Account of Sales of Negroes of the Estate of Thomas Jefferson, University of Virginia Archives, Alderman Library).

Negroes for Sale.

I shall offer at public auction, on Albemarle February court day, before the door of the Swan Tavern, in Charlottesville, 18 or 20 likely negroes.— So far as that relation subsists they will be sold in families. One fourth of the purchase money will be required in hand; on the balance a credit of twelve months will be given, the purchaser giving bond with approved security.

FRANK CARR.

Dec. 11. '24—tFe

Charlottesville Central Gazette, 25 December 1824.

WILL be sold, on the FIRST OF JANUARY, in the town of Charlottesville, in front of the *Eagle Hotel*, THIRTY SLAVES, consisting of men, women and boys among whom are several valuable tradesmen. The terms will be made known on the day of sale.

T. J. RANDOLPH,
Executor of THOMAS JEFFERSON, deceased.

Dec 13

ts

Virginia Advocate, 13 December 1828.

Friday, 15 January 1830

AUCTION and *Commission Business*.

THE subscribers offer their services to the public in the above capacity, viz: as AUCTION & COMMISSION MERCHANTS. They are prepared to receive, and will sell any article entrusted to their care, either at private or public sale, as may be required. Should they meet sufficient encouragement, it is their intention to have regular AUCTION SALES, on each Court day, and on such other public days as may be necessary. Their Commissions will be as reasonable as possible, and proportioned to the value of the articles sold.

Believing such an establishment will be an accommodation to the public, in disposing of many articles and being determined to give strict attention to it, and be punctual in their dealings, they solicit, and will endeavour to merit whatever encouragement a general public may bestow.

P. F. BOYD & BROTHER.

October 30 1829.

N.B. The above will be conducted by P. F. BOYD, at the corner, between the Central Hotel and Court House square.²⁶

□ □ □

Friday, 4 February 1831

NEGROES!

Cash for Negroes.

DANIEL F. GRIGSBY informs the public that he has stationed himself in Charlottesville for a few weeks for the purpose of buying NEGROES—for which he will give the best prices, in CASH. He may

26. There have been three Central Hotels in Charlottesville. The one referred to stood on Market Street between 5th and 4th NE: "CENTRAL HOTEL This extensive and very commodious establishment is situated on the Centre street of Charlottesville, near the Court House; and its location for visitors . . . free from noise and bustle on court days . . . The subscriber has taken this very eligible house for 5 years . . . Joel W. Brown" (*Virginia Advocate*, 16 Feb. 1828). The new business did not advertise selling slaves and only briefly advertised as auctioneers. However, Mr. Boyd continued to operate a general grocery business.

SLAVE SITE

be found at the Central Hotel, in this place. If he should not be at home, Mr. David Fowler will attend to persons that may call.

Any person having likely young Men and Women, are requested to call immediately, as he will not stay any longer than may be necessary to ascertain whether he can buy or not.

The Charlottesville *Jeffersonian Republican*:

Thursday, 23 December 1852

NEGROES FOR SALE.

I AM authorized by Mrs. Susan Ann Craven, to sell 10 or 12 Slaves, consisting of *Women, Boys and Girls*. They are likely and valuable.—If not sold privately, they will be offered at Public Auction in this place, on next January court day.

J. W. Saunders.

The Charlottesville *Advocate*:

16 March 1860

By virtue of a decree pronounced by the County Court of Albemarle, in the Chancery suit of Terrell's vs Baskdale, I shall on Monday the 2nd day of April 1860, (That being Albemarle Court day,) sell publicly in front of the Albemarle Courthouse, a negro woman by the name of Ann, some 18 or 20 years of age, and with an infant at the breast.

Terms of sale—on a credit of six months with interest from the day of sale, the purchaser to give a negotiable note well endorsed—or pay the cash, if he prefers it.

S. V. Southall, Comm'r.

The Charlottesville *Daily Chronicle*:

Thursday, 10 March 1864

AUCTION SALE

OF LADIES AND GENT'S DRESS GOODS

WE will offer at our Auction Rooms, on Saturday, Feb 12th, at 11 o'clock, the following desirable articles: One lot of Prints, One lot of Cambrics, Cotton Cloths, Spring Delanes, Ladies White Hose, Gent's White Socks, Ladies and Children Morocco Boots and Shoes, Pins,

Pocket Handkerchiefs, Combs, Broad Cloth, French Corsets, Dress Braids, Thread, &c.

H. BENSON & BRO.

□ □ □

Tuesday, 18 October 1864

AUCTION SALES.

BY BENSON & BRO.

VALUABLE BUSINESS STAND AT AUCTION.

AT the request of Mr. Thomas J. Vaughan, we will sell on Saturday next 22nd, the house on Bank Street, one door above the Post-office, with a ground rent of \$48 per year. The purchaser can have the privilege of removing the house at once, or let it remain for 3 years from the 1st of January, 1865, by paying the ground rent, at the rate of \$48 per year. The property is now renting for \$400.

BENSON & BRO., Auc'ts.²⁷

□ □ □

Tuesday, 22 December 1864

PUBLIC AUCTION OF SLAVES.

IN PURSUANCE of a decree of the County Court of Albemarle, pronounced on the 5th day of December last, in the case of Maupin vs. Maupin &c., the undersigned, who was appointed a Commissioner for the purpose, will sell, at public auction, in front of the Court House of said county, on Monday the 2nd day of January next, (the same being court day,) two valuable slaves belonging to the estate of Lucy J. Maupin, dec'd,—the one a girl about 15 years of age, and the other a boy about 6 or 7 years of age. Terms Cash.

THOS. WOOD, Com'r.

27. This advertisement is followed by another by Benson & Bro. for the sale of the furniture at the Farish House Hotel.

Wednesday, 15 February 1865

AUCTION SALES.

BY BENSON & BRO.

RARE CHANCE TO GET FIRE WOOD.

AT the request of Mr. James D. Jones, attorney for Gen Cocke, we will sell at Public Auction, on Thursday next the 16th, all the Wood standing on forty acres of land on the Ridge Road running from W. C. Walstrum's land to Moore's Creek—some of it well timbered.

BENSON & BRO.

The Sale will take place at our Auction Rooms at 12 o'clock, M.

□ □ □

Wednesday, 22 February 1865

AUCTION SALES.

BY BENSON & BRO.

CONFEDERATE HORSES, MULES AND WAGONS FOR SALE.

AT the request of Capt. Wood, P.Q.M., we will sell on Monday next, the 27th, at our Auction rooms, 20 condemned Horses and Mules, and several Wagons too heavy for Government use.

BENSON & BRO.

BY BENSON & BRO.

NINE VALUABLE NEGROES AT AUCTION.

WE will sell at our Auction Rooms on the 6th of March, (Court day) a likely young Negro Man, and a young Woman, healthy, and a good house servant, with seven children. They will be sold for Cash.

BENSON & BRO.

The Charlottesville Semi-Weekly Chronicle:

Wednesday, 6 September 1865

BY BENSON & BRO., Auct's.

Large Auction Sale of Splendid
BALTIMORE MADE SADDLES,*Bridles, Buggy-harness, Horse Collars, &c.*

ON Saturday morning next, Sept. 9th, at the Room over our Store, we will sell at public auction, 6 Quilt seat McClelland Saddles, 6 citizens' McClelland Saddles, 6 beautiful Side Saddles, 6 do. Knee Puff, do. 6 citizens' Saddles, 6 sets elegant Buggy Harness, 24 double-reined assorted Bridles, 12 round reined do., 24 handsome Gig Whips, 24 Blind Bridles, 24 Hog Skin Horse Collars.

Sale at 11 o'clock.

Terms—Fifty dollars and under, Cash, over that amount, sixty days credit for good paper.

BENSON & BRO.

Sales of slaves took place at private farms and plantations, as well as in front of public buildings like taverns and the court house. Community activity centered on the Court Square area, especially during Albemarle court days; and slave sales conducted in the open air often took place in front of the court house, on its steps or in its vicinity. When he was 101 years old in 1949, Fountain Hughes told an interviewer of his days as a slave in Charlottesville: "We belonged to people. They'd sell us like they sell horses and cows and hogs and all like that. Have an auction bench, and they put you on, up on the bench and bid on you just same as you bid on cattle you know . . . They'd have a regular, have a sale every month, you know, at the court house." In a more recent interview, Rebecca Fuller McGinness, when aged 106, related the memory of a tree stump in front of the Albemarle County Court house: "My grandmother told me that they used to sell slaves at that tree stump. They ended up taking one daughter and leaving one. That was one of my main experiences of what slave

SLAVE YARD,
BY
ROBERT M. CLARKE.

ON the west side of Whitehall street, who has a commodious, well arranged Yard, with every convenience for the health and comfort of slaves. Constantly kept on hand for sale a large number of

Mechanics,
Coachmen,
Cooks,
House Servants,
And Field Hands.

BUYS AND SELLS ON COMMISSION.
By close personal attention to business he hopes to receive a liberal patronage.

June 23

Charlottesville Advocate, 16 March 1860.

NEGROES FOR SALE.

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J. W. SAUNDERS.
Charlottesville, Dec. 16, 1852.

Charlottesville Jeffersonian Republican, 23 December 1852.

did—separated families.”²⁸

Many types of people sold slaves—agents of the court collecting for debts and taxes or settling estates, agents of individuals, citizens in business or going out of business, friends and family selling to each other. Although Virginia slave traders often called themselves “Auctioneers,” Benson’s auction rooms—despite their offerings of slaves from time to time—were not exclusively, or even primarily, the venue for slave trading. There is no evidence that slave traders brought groups of slaves to Charlottesville during court days for resale, but traders did come to make purchases. Yet the tradition that an auction block located on the south side of Number 0 was used by unadvertised dealers cannot be discarded. Routine use of this or other spots for sales during court days would not have required special notice. Several advertisements specified sales in front of the Eagle Hotel, which would have been very close indeed to the marked “Site of Slave Block.”

28. A transcript and sound files of this interview may be found on the world wide web by searching under his name—Fountain Hughes—or at <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/wpa/wpahome.html>. David A. Maurer, Charlottesville *Daily Progress*, Sunday, 14 Feb. 1999, reported this interview with Mrs. McGinness a year before her death.