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and

MORTALITY

schedules for south carolina

1850-1880

south carolina archives

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United States Census

AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY

SOCIAL STATISTICS

and

MORTALITY

Schedules for South Carolina

1850 - 1880

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INTRODUCTION

In 1919 the United States Bureau of the Census transferred to the South Carolina State Library eighteen volumes and portions of ten other volumes containing the original schedules of agriculture, industry, social statistics, and mortality made under the direction of the Department of the Interior for the seventh (1850), eighth (1860), ninth (1870), and tenth (1880) federal censuses. These records were removed to the Historical Commission of South Carolina in 1949 and became a part of the archives of the state in 1950. Fifteen of the volumes are devoted to the agriculture schedules (1850-80); four to industry (1850-80); three to social statistics (1850-70); one to defective, dependent, and delinquent classes (1880); and four to mortality (1850-80). The time period covered by the census generally extends from June 1 of the year preceding the enumeration to June 1 of the year of the census. Any exceptions to this are noted on the schedule itself.

The manuscript schedules are handwritten on printed forms. The 1850 census lists the state's districts in alphabetical order, with an occasional breakdown by militia beat, parish, town, or other subdivision. Most of the later reports are more systematically broken down into localities within the districts. The districts (or counties, as they became following the 1868 constitution) are listed in alphabetical order. Subdivisions are rarely arranged alphabetically.¹

The schedules were prepared as the detailed record from which regional and national compilations could be made. The published census compilations, summarizing returns by subject, state, district, and sometimes by selected townships, remain the basic source for students using these economic and social statistics on the broad scale. But the original schedules are a remarkable collection. Researchers concerned with specific localities or with individual landholdings, slaveholdings, and production will find them of the utmost value. Those working on related subjects, such as the landholdings of a single class or group, the health and occupation of the slave, or the security of Negro land ownership from 1870 to 1880, will discover that the manuscript census provides a detailed and comprehensive source for information which it was not specifically designed to demonstrate.

¹Since the schedules for each district or subdivision were not always bound together, and district boundaries in 1850 and 1860 were not scrupulously observed, a thorough check will be necessary to locate all entries for a single locality.

AGRICULTURE

The first agricultural census of the United States forms part of the sixth census of 1840. This limited report contains nothing more than inventories of the principal types of farm animals, wool and soil crop production, and the value of poultry and dairy products.

Ten years later a more comprehensive census was taken. Statistics on each plantation, farm, and market garden are given. The name of the owner, agent, or manager is listed, although the relationship between the name given and the land inventoried is not always supplied. Items reported include the total acreage improved and unimproved, and the cash value of the farm, farm implements and machinery, the number and value of livestock, and the amount of wool, cotton, grain, and other staples produced.² Also itemized are the value of animals slaughtered and the value of rural home manufactures producing less than \$500 worth of goods each year. Cotton gins and similar enterprises sometimes used and operated by a single plantation are not included, but can be found in the industrial schedules.

The two succeeding censuses of agriculture, in 1860 and 1870, were compiled in essentially the same manner. Following the Civil War, economic necessity, the breakup of large plantations, and the emancipation of the Negro vastly increased the number of land tenants and sharecroppers in South Carolina. The 1880 census introduces a crude, but useful, classification of the type of tenure under which each separate farm was worked, identifying the operator of each holding as an owner, tenant, or sharecropper. But there is no indication of whose land the tenant or sharecropper was working. Indeed, the census definition of a tenant—as one who rented a farm for fixed money—perhaps made it difficult for the enumerator to classify the more informal grades of tenancy customary to the region. This census also notes the cost of agricultural labor for the year, broken down by the race of the laborers employed and by the number of weeks for which they were hired. The cost of fence building and fertilizers are added items in 1880, and poultry is listed for the first time since 1840. The essential information recorded in the earlier censuses is provided in a more compact and more detailed form.

The expanding scope of the agricultural census in the years 1840-80 reflects a growing need for detailed and sophisticated accounts of the state of the national economy. For the historian the manuscript schedules furnish a minute and increasingly comprehensive view of the agricultural economy of the state. They are equally valuable as a guide to the social structure of rural South Carolina during a period of momentous change that transformed the system of labor, revolutionized the ownership of land, and finally ended the state's reliance on low-country crops.

²In none of the years was the acreage under cultivation broken down by crops. This information does find its way into the state census of 1868. In most other respects, the 1868 census records the same type of information as the United States Census of 1870. *Returns of Crops, and Other Statistics. . .*, 27 vols., Manuscript Schedules, Census of South Carolina for the Year 1868, South Carolina Archives, Columbia, S. C.

INDUSTRY

The schedules of industry for 1850 list the name of each corporation, company, or individual producing articles to the annual value of \$500 or more, with a description of the type of business. Statistics for each establishment refer to the capital invested, the raw materials, power, and mechanical resources used, and the quantity and value of annual production. In this schedule the number of hands usually hired (male and female) and the total monthly cost for each sex is recorded.³

The 1860 census contains essentially the same information. In 1870 the information is expanded slightly to distinguish between child and adult labor used. The 1880 census of manufactures is more detailed and complex in its presentation. The counties are listed in alphabetical order, and each county is subdivided into the following categories: flour and grist mills, cheese, butter, and condensed milk factories; boots and shoes, leather (tanned and curried); lumber mills, saw mills, brick yards, and tile works; distilling; slaughtering, meat packing, and salt works; paper mills; coal mines; agricultural implement works; quarries; and products of industry. Listed beneath these categories are the townships and localities where such enterprises were located.

Throughout this period, South Carolina's industries were mostly farm or home related. There were large numbers of grist and saw mills, blacksmiths' and wheelwrights' shops, saddle and harness makers, and carpenters. Rice mills were prominent in the low country before the war. Naval stores and other extractive industries continued to be important, but some decline in the number of small extractive operations in these years can be detected. Grist and saw mills were numerous in the midlands. Most of the state's whiskey distilleries were located in the piedmont.

The schedules are naturally of great importance to the researcher concerned with the industrial or technological development of the state. But the enumerators' determination to include all manufacturing operations, however small, makes them invaluable to those interested in plantation economy, rural trade, the artisan classes of the towns, or the distribution and production of industrial plants connected with the growing of staple crops.

SOCIAL STATISTICS

The information given in the social statistics schedules for 1850 and 1860 includes: the aggregate value of real and personal property in each division; a breakdown of taxes paid (varying in detail from division to division); a record of unsuccessful harvests in the year

³The schedules of 1850 and 1860 did not require the enumerator to distinguish between free and slave labor used, although the monthly cost of labor often works as a clue to the proportion of slaves in each work force. Nor did the 1870 and 1880 schedules provide for a breakdown of labor by race. Occasionally the census taker made his own summary of slave, free white, and free colored labor employed in his district. See, for example, the summary made by the census taker in Greenville, 1850.

of the census, with a note on the usual annual production of each defective crop; a list of schools, colleges, and academies, with the number of teachers and pupils and the sources of funds; a list of public and personal libraries with the number of volumes in each;⁴ a list of newspapers and periodicals published in the division, describing their character and circulation; a list of churches, by denominations, with the seating capacity of each and an evaluation of its property;⁵ a statement of the average wages and board allowed to agricultural workers, female domestics, carpenters, and day laborers; and the number of paupers supported by the community, criminals convicted in the year preceding the census, and convicts in jail at the time of the census. Separate schedules follow the statistics for each district, treating each major town, parish, county seat, and rural subdivision in the same detail. The information recorded for each smaller division is usually repeated in the statistics for the district or parish to which it belonged. As with so many of the schedules, failure to provide for a breakdown of slave and free people limits their usefulness.⁶

The 1870 social schedules contain most of the same information, adding information on public debt, dividing paupers and convicts in jail by race, and providing a more detailed and comprehensive list of public libraries and libraries owned by private citizens. Different types of educational institutions are more rigorously distinguished. Statistics are only supplied for each county. There are no separate schedules for subdivisions.

The census of 1880 contains only a supplemental schedule—a detailed enumeration of the defective, dependent, and delinquent classes in each subdivision. Listed by name are the insane, idiots, deaf mutes, blind, paupers, indigent persons, homeless children, and prisoners. Some medical information is given. Race, sex, and age are recorded in each instance.

MORTALITY

The mortality schedules record the names of all persons usually living at home who died during the twelve months ending on June 1 of the census year. In 1850 and 1860 the

⁴The enumerators seem to have had few definite instructions on the listing of libraries. Sometimes all personal libraries in the division are aggregated, with the number of private libraries and total number of volumes recorded. Sometimes only private libraries with more than 600 or 1,000 volumes are listed. Occasionally, and very usefully, the enumerator has provided the owner's name: this enables the researcher to find, for example, the massive library of 40,000 volumes kept in Barnwell District by Senator James H. Hammond.

⁵Slave churches in the low country can sometimes be identified by the very low value of property owned and their position at the end of the list. In many instances the word "Africa" beside the denomination, or a descriptive note from the enumerator, distinguishes them with more certainty. Occasionally the enumerator goes into more detail: in the report for St. Andrew's Parish, 1850, for example, the census taker identifies certain slave churches and adds that they were erected by planters for the exclusive use of particular plantations.

⁶The schedules did not provide for racial distinctions or for a distinction between slave and free persons. Statistics on the average wages for labor perhaps suffer most from this defect. Most of the figures for agricultural workers, day laborers, and domestics appear to be the average sums paid to hire (or to hire and board) slaves. In some cases the enumerator adds a note, explaining the type of labor—slave or free—on which his figures are based. Criminals and convicts are not identified by race or condition.

schedules contain the name of the deceased or his owner, his age, sex, marital status, color, profession, and condition.⁷ The place of birth, month and cause of death, and number of days ill are also given. The deaths schedule of 1870 adds the family number ascribed by the enumerator of the population schedule and the origins of the deceased's parents.⁸ In this year the number of days ill is not noted. The mortality census of 1880 includes all of the information in the previous schedules, adds the length of time the dead person lived in the county, records his citizenship, notes whether the disease was imported from another area, and, for the first time, gives the name of the attending physician. Persons of Indian and "Chinese" origins are distinguished.

The wealth of information which the interested researcher may discover here is surprising. The deaths census might provide the basis for a number of studies: comparative infant mortality rates among whites and blacks, in, out of, before, and after slavery; diseases prevalent among different classes and in different regions; the hazards of particular occupations; or the instance and economic impact of epidemics, accidents, and suicides among the slaves. In addition, the mortality schedules of 1850 and 1860 are among the very few sources to record the occupation and marital status of slaves.⁹

Apart from their intrinsic worth to the social historian, the schedules are of crucial value to the genealogist tracing slave or free intestate ancestors who might have died in one of the four full years covered by the censuses.

⁷In the 1850 and 1860 mortality schedules slaves are easily identified, as the statistics include the civil status of the deceased. However, not every census enumerator listed the owners of the dead slaves, and those who did used several methods. In many cases, both the dead slave's name and that of his owner can be found.

⁸Schedule No. 1—Population, Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, South Carolina (National Archives Microcopy No. 593, Rolls 1481-1512).

⁹The enumerator's personal preference seemed to determine whether he recorded the occupation and marital status of each slave. In the coastal districts census takers may have been more capable of supplying this information and more interested in recording it.

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SOUTH CAROLINA ARCHIVES MICROCOPIES

Microcopy Number 1: Records in the British Public Record Office relating to South Carolina, 1663-1782, with general index. 12 rolls.

A printed calendar is in preparation.

Microcopy Number 2: United States Census. Original Agriculture, Industry, Social Statistics, and Mortality Schedules for South Carolina, 1850-1880. 22 rolls.

With a printed introduction.

Microcopy Number 3: Records of the Public Treasurers of South Carolina, 1725-1776. 2 rolls.

With a printed introduction and tables.

Microcopy Number 4: Records of the South Carolina Treasury, 1775-1780. 6 rolls.

With a printed introduction.

Microcopy Number 5: South Carolina Treasury Ledgers and Journals, 1783-1791. 4 rolls.

With a printed introduction and index.

Microcopy Number 6: Duties on Trade at Charleston, 1784-1789. 1 roll.

With a printed introduction and tables.

Microcopy Number 7: South Carolina Treasury Ledgers and Journals, 1791-1865. 12 rolls.

With a printed introduction.

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