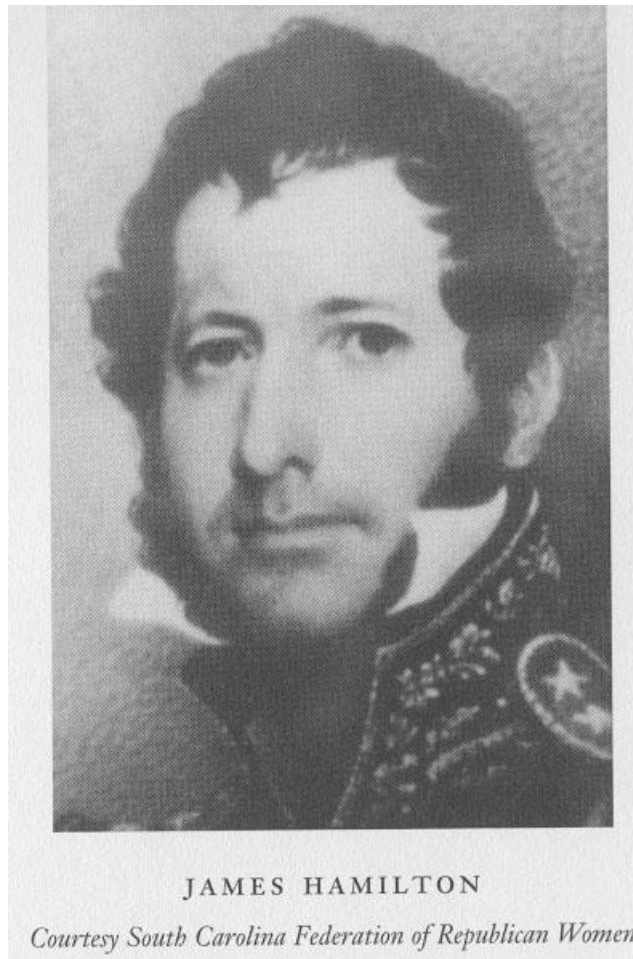


Retrieve Plantation

Brazosport Archaeological Society



The Retrieve Plantation in Brazoria County, Texas began in the hopes and dreams of two enterprising often debt ridden men, Abner Jackson and James Hamilton. The name Retrieve was most probably selected by the desires of both men wanting to retrieve their lost fortunes in the new Republic of Texas. Through the days of the Republic, early statehood, and the Civil War the Jackson and Hamilton families operated the Retrieve Plantation producing bales of cotton, hogsheads of sugar, and barrels of molasses using a large force of slave labor. With the loss of that labor force the loss of the plantation to the mortgage brokers was inevitable. The Galveston firm of Ball, Hutchings & Company operated the plantation for many years after the Civil War and ownership remained in the Ball, Sealy, and Hutchings families until after the turn of the century. Through the owners convict labor was leased from the state into the early 1900's. Finally in February 1918 the Texas Prison Commission purchased the property along with several other tracts totaling 7448 acres for \$320,879 and operated it as a prison farm [Deed: 145 242/44]. Prisoners who labored in the hot and humid Gulf Coast climate sometimes referred to

Retrieve as “Burnin Hell”¹. It is still owned by the Texas Department of Corrections until this day.

When James Hamilton² married Elizabeth Mathews Heyward³ November 15, 1813 his new wife entered the marriage owning three South Carolina plantations and over 200 slaves. They would have eleven children, several of whom would later come to Texas. Initially Hamilton became master of one of his wife’s plantations, Callawassie Island. By 1819 he had sold his wife’s plantations and slaves and moved to Charleston, South Carolina entering the law profession.⁴ When a political opportunity arose he served as a state representative and was later elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1822, 1824, and 1826. Electing not to run again in 1828, he left Congress in the spring of 1829. After being elected Governor of South Carolina in 1830 Hamilton became a guiding member of the Nullification movement, but by 1833 had left public service.

In 1824 James Hamilton had bought a Savannah River rice plantation, Rice Hope in South Carolina. Just across the river he also purchased a hundred acre island, Pennyworth in Georgia waters. In late 1835 another rice plantation Fife was purchased near Rice Hope. Also before the end of the same year he was elected the first President of the Bank of Charleston. Opening the firm of Hamilton & Company in 1836 and later in 1837 James Hamilton & Son with his son James the family entered the cotton brokerage business.⁵

While serving as President of the Bank of Charleston along with the family’s Rice Hope and Fife plantations producing well in the early to middle 1830’s Hamilton experienced economic prosperity.⁶ The Financial Panic of 1837, unfortunate cotton speculation schemes, and the Southwestern Railroad Bank scandal led to an almost complete reversal of his fortunes. By the time the former Governor of South Carolina turned his attention to the Republic of Texas most of his family investments were over extended. His association with the South Carolina Land Company in early Texas land speculation led Hamilton to develop a deep interest in Texas. Although he turned down the offer to be Commander of the Texas Army in December 1836 he elected to serve as a diplomat and loan commissioner from 1839-1842 struggling to achieve recognition and loans for the Republic of Texas in Europe. Even more indebtedness was amassed by Hamilton trying to secure a \$5,000,000 loan for the new republic over this three year period. The financing of his two trips to Europe and expenses were from his own pocket with the hope of a lucrative \$250,000 commission if he secured the loan. His return to Texas in February 1842 ended in his dismissal from his diplomatic post by President Sam Houston without the securing of the loan or his commission. He would spend the rest of his life trying to recoup the debts owed him by the Republic of Texas and actually using potential earnings from the Republic as leverage for future loans.

Previous to his trips to Europe James Hamilton had borrowed using family and friends to co-sign his notes in order to provide funds for his travels and to keep his plantations running at home. While on his second trip to Europe he actually misappropriated funds amounting to \$50,000 from the James River and Kanawha Company, a Virginia investment company, to his

¹ Retrieve Plantation, Handbook of Texas Online

² Father Major James Hamilton, Mother Elizabeth Lynch Harleston, Born May 8, 1786 South Carolina

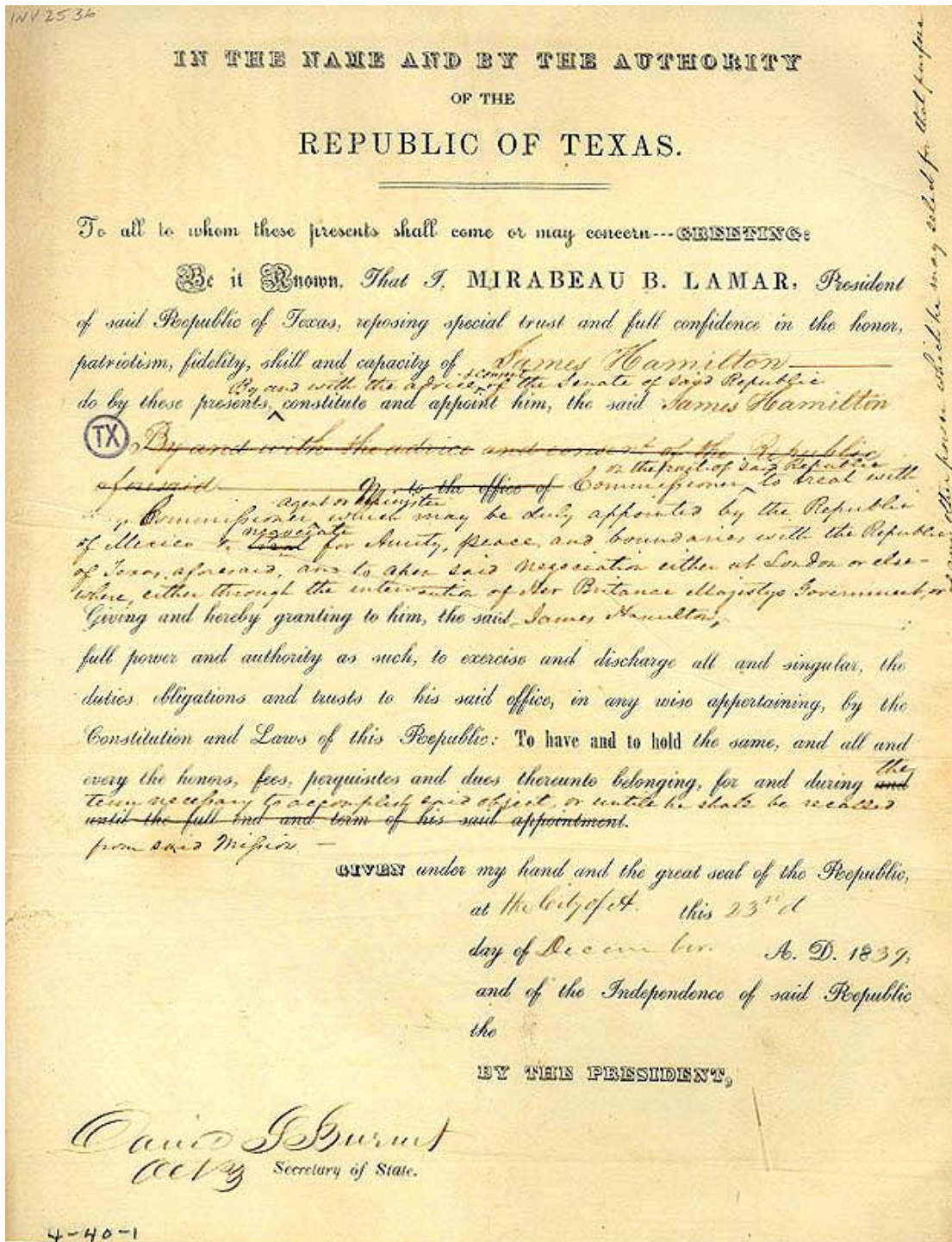
³ Father Daniel Heyward, Mother Ann Sarah Trezevant, Born 1795

⁴ Robert Tinkler, James Hamilton of South Carolina, pp.32-33.

⁵ Ibid., p. 153.

⁶ Ibid., p. 155.

own account to finance his diplomatic mission. On his return to Virginia he was embarrassingly forced to sign over the rights to his claims on the Texas government in lieu of his salary and expenses amounting to \$60,000. By some estimates Hamilton's debts amounted to \$700,000 by 1840 and his precise amount of indebtedness by 1842 was impossible to determine from available records.⁷



⁷ Robert Tinkler, James Hamilton of South Carolina, p.210.

In order to protect the family property, particularly Rice Hope and Pennyworth, from creditors, James Hamilton was sued by his wife Elizabeth for the misuse of property in her trust estate. This legal maneuver stemmed from a postnuptial agreement that James and Elizabeth had entered into in 1819 under which her property was placed in a trust. James Hamilton served as one of four trustees with the proviso that he could not make any changes in the estate without the approval of a majority of the trustees. In the case *Hamilton vs Hamilton*, which began in 1842, Elizabeth sued her husband for having violated that proviso in 1824, when he had sold part of her property in order to raise funds to purchase Rice Hope, Pennyworth, and the slaves who lived there.

The court ruled in Elizabeth's favor and created a new trust for her and the children; one in which James Hamilton would have no rights or interest [Deed: H 121/23 H 323/28]. The court's decision effectively shielded his family's assets from his many creditors. Actually he was able to expand his holdings with a new cotton plantation in southwest Georgia which was run by his son Oliver P. Hamilton. Leaving Charleston he moved to Alabama with his family to Oswichee Bend on the Chattahoochee River managing a six thousand acre cotton plantation for the Oswichee Company and his partners.

During this period James Hamilton and Abner Jackson entered into a relationship which would last for many years. Their first partnership was in the Otranto Plantation in South Carolina, 1474 acres and 18 slaves mortgaged for \$24,000.⁸ The two also purchased from the John Ferguson Estate 120 slaves for \$39,583, February 20, 1838.⁹ This group of slaves was destined for Hamilton's new cotton plantation in southwest Georgia.

Abner Jackson¹⁰ was born in Washington County Pennsylvania and started a family in South Carolina. Jackson was married to Margaret Strobel¹¹, who was the widow of John Strobel. She had one son, Louis M. Strobel, before her marriage to Jackson. Abner and Margaret's first three children, Asenath (born ~1835), John C. (bn. ~1837), and Andrew (bn. ~1840), were born in South Carolina. Their fourth child, George W. (bn. ~1842), was born in Georgia and their youngest child, Abner, Jr. (bn. ~1847) was born in Texas. It is believed that Jackson left his family in South Carolina¹² or Georgia when he made his way to Texas.

According to family tradition, Abner Jackson came to Texas and made one crop on the Trinity River in 1838 (Strobel, 1926:42).¹³ Jackson removed his and James Hamilton's slaves from Baker County, Georgia aboard the schooner *Neptune* to Texas in February 1842 (Deed: D-347/48). In a letter to General Albert Sidney Johnston Hamilton claimed that he did not know of Jackson's plans and urged Johnston to assist Jackson in selecting a piece of property that might could be leased for the year in order to produce a crop.¹⁴ He also requested Jackson to consult

⁸ Charleston Mortgage Book, 3Y, 365-67 [1838], South Carolina Department of Archives and History

⁹ Charleston Mortgage Book, 3Z, 352 [20 February 1838], South Carolina Department of Archives and History Vol. B 374, Deed Records, Brazoria County, Angleton, Texas

¹⁰ Born March 18, 1808 Washington County, Pennsylvania one of thirteen children.

¹¹ Father Baltus Inabinet, Sr., Mother Unknown, Born ~1807 South Carolina.

¹² 1840 Census Spartanburg County South Carolina lists Margaret Jackson, 2 males 5-10yrs old and 1 female 5-10 yrs old with her age being 30-40 yrs old. This would not exactly match the family ages at that time for her children, Louis M. Strobel, Asenath Jackson, and John C. Jackson. 1840 Census Baker County Georgia lists Abner Jackson, 3 males under 5, 1 male 5-10 yrs old, 1 female under 5, 1 female 20-30, and 1 female 30-40. This would not exactly match family ages at the time either unless a relative was living with them with children.

¹³ The 1840 Texas Census lists A. Jackson living in Liberty County, with 1825 acres under survey and 11 horses.

¹⁴ James Hamilton to General Albert Sidney Johnson, 4 March 1842, James Hamilton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Manuscripts Department, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

with General Johnson on leasing or buying any property.¹⁵ This may have been a ruse on the part Hamilton as Jackson was more than likely staying slightly ahead of their creditors in the United States. The 1842 Brazoria County Tax assessor roles list Jackson with 3200 acres of land, 74 slaves, and 4 horses.



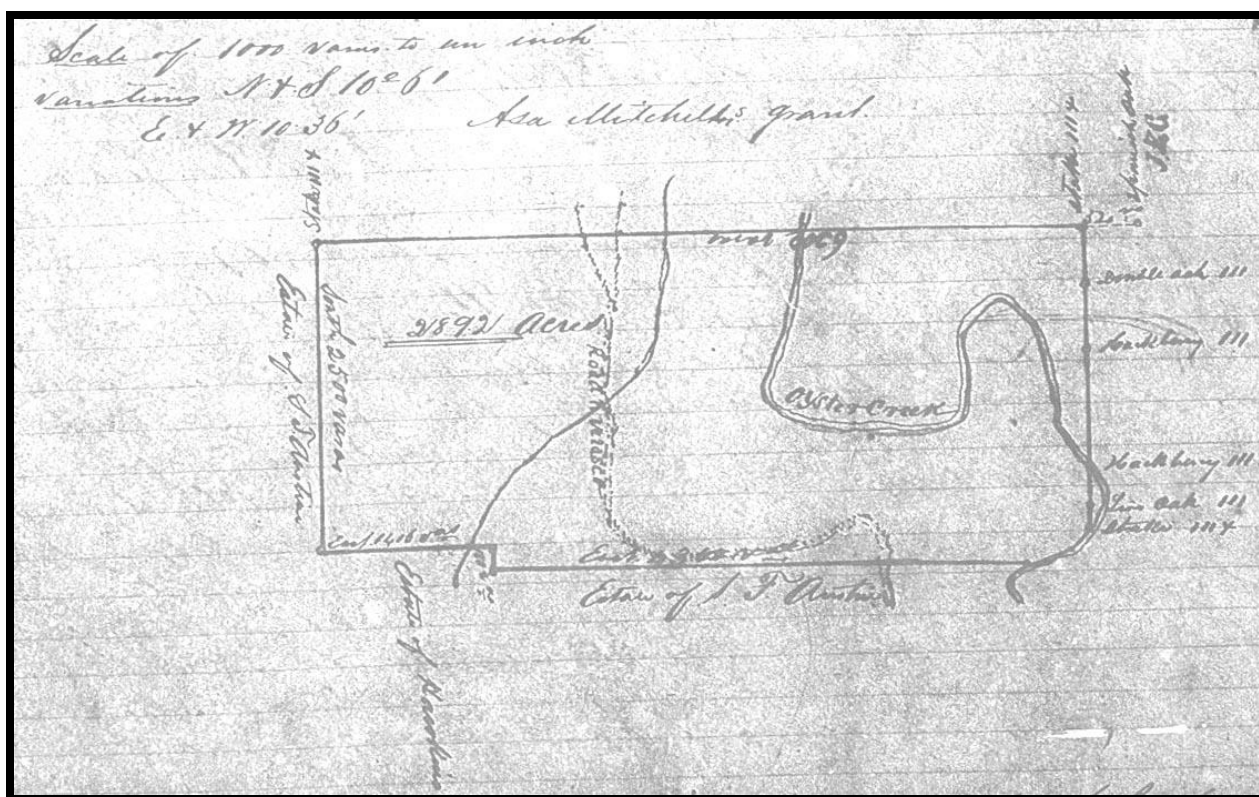
Abner Jackson

Courtesy of the Lake Jackson Historical Museum, Lake Jackson, Texas

Preparations for the beginning of a plantation were well underway in the fall of 1843, when Abner Jackson contracted with John Mady to build “running gear for a gin and outside cotton press upon the plantation of said A. Jackson” for \$275 [Deed: B-319/20]. On April 10, 1844 Jackson mortgaged 2892 acres on Oyster Creek just below the Asa Mitchell League from James and Emily Perry and William G. Hill and Eliza M. Hill for \$9145; the previous year he may have been leasing the property [Deed: B-403/06]. Tax records for that year list 2892 acres land in the county, 86 slaves, 8 horses, and 350 head of cattle. Sarah A. Wharton also sold to Jackson two other tracts of land June 15, 1844 in order to pay off debts against the Estate of William H. Wharton. Jackson assumed these debts in the form of mortgages from Henry H. Williams for \$2343 and John S. Sydnor for \$3190. This entitled him to a 383 acre adjoining tract

¹⁵ James Hamilton to Major Abner Jackson, 4 March 1842, James Hamilton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Manuscripts Department, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

just east of his plantation and 1200 more acres just a little further east (See Borden Survey 1848 for location of 1200 acre tract p.7) with all these additional properties from the Jared E. Groce 5 League tract [Deed: D14/19].¹⁶ In a document February 19, 1844 James Hamilton received \$7500 financed by his sons Daniel H. and Thomas Lynch from the Trust of Elizabeth Hamilton [Deed D347/48]. This money was used to secure half interest in the lands bought by Jackson. On February 10, 1845 Jackson conveyed to Henry R. W. Hill of New Orleans half interest in his 2892, 383, and 1200 acre tract properties, livestock, and plantation improvements in return for Hill keeping a like number of slaves on the property to cut live oak timber along with constructing a canal and in return for the House of Dick & Hill of New Orleans paying half the operating expenses. Hill immediately transferred the title over to Thomas Lynch Hamilton for the trust of Elizabeth Hamilton and her children [Deed: B 479/81]. This allowed James Hamilton to be half owner of the property without it being in his name thus hiding it from his creditors in the U.S.



Survey by William Henry Austin August 6, 1843 [Deed: B 405]

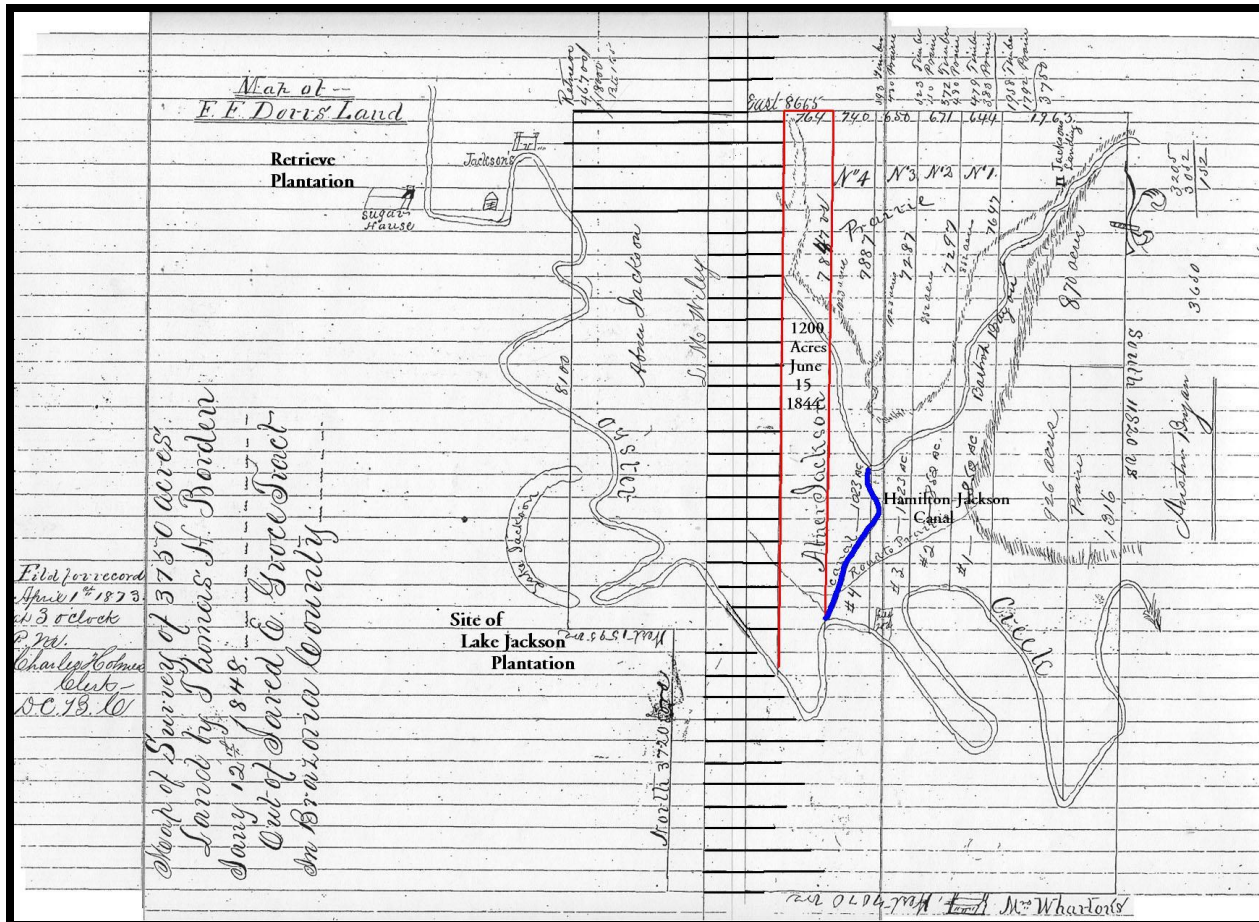
The canal construction remained at a standstill until James Hamilton wrote to James F. Perry February 2, 1845, requesting information about the canal:

...I would have been much gratified to have had some conversation with you in regard to the proposed communication between the Brasos & Bastrop Bayou, which I hope during

¹⁶ The 2892 and 383 acre tracts would become the nucleus for the Retrieve Plantation.

the next Summer Major Jackson will be able to commence & finish the communication between Bastrop & Oyster Creek by the Spring.

Should Mr. Hammekin have left with you any of Major Austins¹⁷ Profiles or Surveys I will thank you to hand them to Major Jackson or inform him where they are to be found...[James F. Perry Papers]



Thomas H. Borden Survey January 12, 1848 [Deed: N 538/39]

Jackson had to transport any produce overland several miles from his plantation headquarters located on the bank of Oyster Creek east to a steamboat landing on Bastrop Bayou. From this location a small boat could travel down Bastrop Bayou to Bastrop Bay (San Luis Bay) and then to Galveston Bay. The opening of a canal between Oyster Creek and Bastrop Bayou would open the way for shipping directly from his plantation.¹⁸

On November 13, 1845, James F. and Emily Perry with William G. and Eliza Hill under the charter granted the Brazos Canal Company next entered into an agreement with Abner Jackson to complete a series of canals that would connect Bastrop Bayou and Bastrop Bay with the Brazos River. Jackson was “to dig or cause to be dug a canal not to be less than twenty four feet at the bottom with a slope of not less that one foot to one on the banks & to contain not less than three feet

¹⁷ William Henry Austin was the surveyor for the San Luis Company and platted the city of San Luis.

¹⁸ Notice canal already documented on the Thomas H. Borden 1848 survey.

of water to connect the River Brazos with Bastrop Bayou & San Luis harbor to commence the first day of May next & to complete the first section between Bastrop Bayou & Oyster Creek¹⁹ within two years from the above named time and the second section between Oyster Creek and the Brazos²⁰ within four years” [Deed: D 36/37]. Jackson was to receive stock bonuses for completion of each section of canal and agree to purchase stock in the San Luis Company.

Construction on the first section of canal connecting Bastrop Bayou and Oyster Creek was begun using slave labor from Abner Jackson’s plantation and oxen to pull the Fresno’s. Jackson wrote James F. Perry requesting some oxen to help with the canal April 15, 1847:

...we are trying to get up some oxen for the canal and you will oblige me if it suits your convenience to let me have some that will answer well for that purpose...[James F. Perry Papers]

During this same period Abner Jackson was under severe financial distress due to the mortgages he owed for slaves and additional lands. James Hamilton wrote several letters to James Perry trying to convince him that it was in his best interest that he should help keep Jackson from being foreclosed on and that he would help secure financing in the United States:

March 26, 1847

I beg leave to say that I have every expectation of obtaining from New York by the 1st June an account equal to lift my encumbrance on our Oyster Creek Lands...
...You must not disturb Jackson this Summer. Any injury to his credit would event an operation on the Court & might be very injurious to your own interests at San Luis—Indeed Dear Sir you have a great Stake in sustaining a man of his decision & energy in our Enterprise...[James F. Perry Papers]

At the same time Perry was being advised by Jonas Butler of Galveston that it was time to foreclose on Jackson and make him settle his debts:

February 16th, 1847

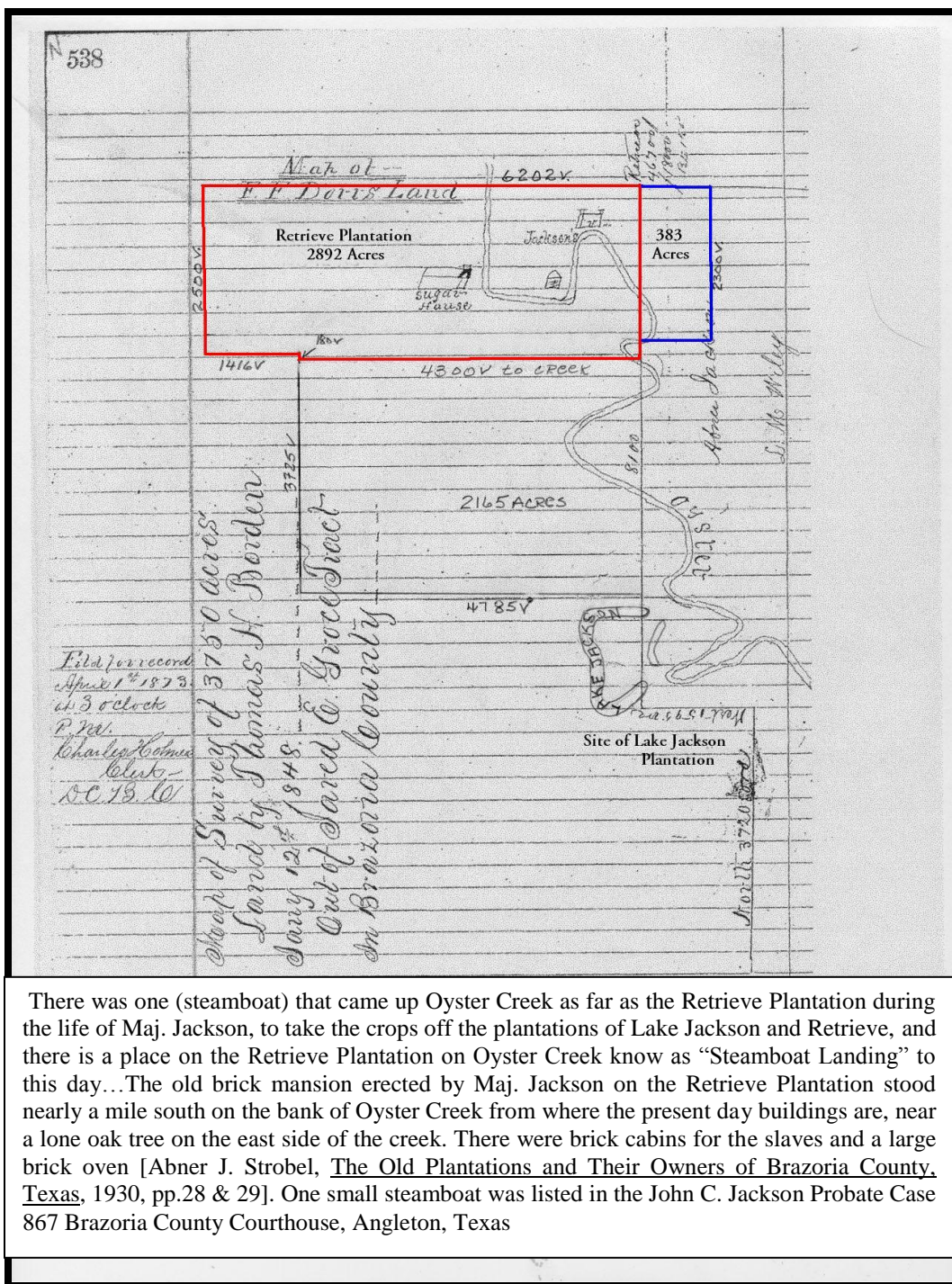
I wish to foreclose the mortgage taken by you from Abner Jackson to secure the note now held by Reed and in Judgment—It is the best & surest way to get the money out of Jackson...The time for court is coming round rapidly...[James F. Perry Papers].

The Perrys and Hills brought suit²¹ against Abner Jackson; and he was forced to sell the property (2892 & 383 acre tracts) on April 1, 1848 to Henry R. W. Hill of New Orleans before it was sacrificed on the auction block [Deed: D 634-635]. Hill immediately mortgaged the whole property to Burl McBride executor of the Estate of John Ferguson of South Carolina for \$30,000 and McBride was to release his mortgage on the slaves on the plantation while they were to be sold at auction by Henry R. W. Hill [Deeds: D 625 & E 48/51]. The cash raised by this mortgage was used to settle all of Abner Jackson’s mortgages on the Retrieve and return ownership to the Trust of Elizabeth Hamilton & children (See Appendix A for list of Abner Jackson’s debts at this time).

¹⁹ This section of canal is what is locally known as the “Slave Ditch” or “Hamilton-Jackson Canal”.

²⁰ The exact location of the canal between Oyster Creek and the Brazos was not disclosed in this document.

²¹ District Court Minutes 1847: 755/56, Brazoria County Courthouse, Angleton, Texas



There was one (steamboat) that came up Oyster Creek as far as the Retrieve Plantation during the life of Maj. Jackson, to take the crops off the plantations of Lake Jackson and Retrieve, and there is a place on the Retrieve Plantation on Oyster Creek know as "Steamboat Landing" to this day...The old brick mansion erected by Maj. Jackson on the Retrieve Plantation stood nearly a mile south on the bank of Oyster Creek from where the present day buildings are, near a lone oak tree on the east side of the creek. There were brick cabins for the slaves and a large brick oven [Abner J. Strobel, The Old Plantations and Their Owners of Brazoria County, Texas, 1930, pp.28 & 29]. One small steamboat was listed in the John C. Jackson Probate Case 867 Brazoria County Courthouse, Angleton, Texas

View of 1848 Thomas H. Borden Survey with Retrieve Boundaries & Lake Jackson Moved Closer to Proper Location

While the Hamilton family retained control of the Retrieve Plantation, Jackson moved south of the Retrieve Plantation to an area near a small oxbow lake named Lake Jackson and established a new plantation, Lake Place or Lake Jackson Plantation. The continuation of the

canal system by the Brazos Canal Company was brought to an end, although James Hamilton had wanted to extend the charter for the canal until 1852.²²

During this same time General Greenberry Harrison, along with two other men, was employed to conduct a survey of the Brazos River from Washington-on the Brazos to the Gulf to determine the cost of removing obstacles and improving the channel. During the course of the survey, he did observe the work already done on the canal and gives us an insight into the course the Brazos Canal Company had chosen to connect the Brazos with Galveston Bay:

The *Pioneer* is a small boat built at Washington expressly for the purpose of making an accurate survey of the Brazos River...three men on board, employed to make this survey, namely, Gen. Harrison, Mr. Tarvir, and Mr. Burke...The *Pioneer* then pursued her way under the direction of Gen. Harrison. She reached the mouth of Buffalo Bayou²³...This bayou connects the canal, now in the progress of construction with the Brazos. They proceeded up the bayou about four miles and had their boat carried over land three fourths of a mile to Oyster Creek. This is the route for the canal. They then followed Oyster Creek to the point intersected by the canal from Bastrop Bayou. Thence they pursued the canal and the channel of Bastrop Bayou to its entrance into Galveston bay opposite San Luis Island; and there sounded out the main channel to this city where they arrived last night, being just 16 days from Washington...

Between Washington and the projected canal there are five shoals or riffles, Cochrane's 75 miles below Washington, San Felipe 35 miles below Cochran's, Cooper's 5 miles below San Felipe, Randon's 45 miles below Cooper', and Thompson's near Richmond...Gen. Harrison estimates...to make permanent navigation year round, at less than \$2000—that is for steam boats drawing any thing less than 3 feet of water. An additional expense of perhaps as much more, may be necessary for removing all the snags...

Buffalo Bayou connecting with the channel has an easy entrance from the river, and has a perfectly straight channel for about four miles with two feet depth in extreme low water, and on a soft mud bottom. The first part of the canal from this bayou to Oyster Creek is three fourths of a mile. The second part from Oyster Creek to Bastrop Bayou is one mile. This part is more than half complete.²⁴ Gen. H. examined the soil where excavations have been made to the full depth, and finds it a strong stiff clay the whole distance, the best quality for a canal [See Borden Survey above]. He also sounded down Bastrop Bayou, and found the shallowest places 2 feet 3 inches, 2 feet 6 inches, 2 feet 10 inches, and 3 feet deep with a soft mud bottom. The shoal not far from the mouth has been cut with a channel of three feet.²⁵ From Bastrop Bayou to this city, the channel is generally 6 to 8 feet...[*Galveston Weekly News*, April 21, 1848].

Henry R. W. Hill gave Thomas Lynch Hamilton his power of attorney to finance the operation of the Retrieve Plantation. Edmund Molyneaux, Jr., the British consul at Savannah, Georgia had advanced James Hamilton monies in 1839 or 1840, which in large part had not been repaid. In March 1849 in order to secure the debt and borrow more monies several drafts amounting to over \$71,000 drawn on Hill McLean & Co. of New Orleans and bonds worth \$59,000 were issued by T. Lynch Hamilton payable to Molyneaux [Deed E 170/76]. In addition the mortgage of Burl McBride administer for the Estate of John Ferguson was still in effect for

²² James F. Perry Papers December 29, 1847 Letter Guy M. Bryan to James F. and Emily Perry.

²³ Buffalo Camp Bayou.

²⁴ It is still not understood whether this canal was ever completely finished or ever used for its original purpose.

²⁵ The clearing of the shoal at the mouth of Bastrop Bayou may be the work that Frederick Lemsky started.

\$30,000. An additional of \$53,200 bond was issued to Elizabeth Lynch Prioleau, his aunt with all drafts and bonds secured by the Retrieve property and the sugar crops to be produced thereon [Deed E319/20]. The payments for these debts were all set to be paid through 1856.

The 1850 census lists Oliver Perry Hamilton newly arrived in Texas to oversee the operations of the Retrieve²⁶:

O. P. Hamilton	Planter	27	South Carolina
Edwin Worrell	Overseer	25	Georgia
P. R. Collins	Overseer	30	Georgia
John Waggoner	Wheel Right	20	Germany
J. H. Prilou ²⁷	Top Engineer	35	South Carolina
George Debritton	Sugar Boiler	24	Denmark
John Lang	Engineer	24	England
William Runnells	Cooper	35	England
C. L. Krause	Sugar Boiler	27	Denmark

The 1850 Agricultural Census lists 790 acres improved and \$23,700 bring the value of the plantation with \$16,070 worth of farm machinery. The livestock listed were 8 horses, 66 mules, 20 milk cows, 30 oxen, 400 head of cattle, and 100 hogs. The agricultural output for 1849 was 8200 bushels of corn, 2000 bushels of sweet potatoes, 700 pounds of butter, 10 tons of hay, and 558 hogsheads of sugar. The molasses for the year was lost or burned. The 1850 Brazoria County tax records list 146 slaves²⁸ valued at \$58,400 along with 74 horses, 350 head of cattle, ox cart, and hogs with 3275 acres of land for a total value of \$85425. A serious amount of manpower was being sustained to make Retrieve a productive sugar plantation.²⁹ The Retrieve produced 450, 585, and 320 hogsheads of sugar 1852-1854.³⁰ While this was an impressive amount of production it could not keep the creditors at bay. By 1850 James Hamilton owed Mary Martha McRa's estate approximately \$50,000. This amount was due to the fact that while she was declared insane, Hamilton had sold her Bank of Charleston stock for over \$37,000 and had used the proceeds to buy twenty-five slaves, known as the Lundy gang (See Appendix B), whom he settled on the Retrieve in 1846. Threatened with arrest Hamilton, executed an order to his son Oliver, now manager of the Retrieve, to deliver the Lundy gang over to Albertus C. Spain, Mrs. McRa's lawyer. Oliver P. Hamilton refused to surrender the slaves citing Henry R. W. Hill's right to ownership. The Lundy gang was never turned over, however, and in later years Hamilton claimed not to know the true owner. His creditor, however, finally won a suit against Hamilton

²⁶ James Hamilton had lost his plantation in Georgia to the creditors freeing up his son Oliver P. Hamilton to come to Texas. The two overseers listed in the census may have come with him.

²⁷ Prioleau

²⁸ This total may represent 5 separate groups of slaves; the 1850 Slave Census lists 136 slaves.

²⁹ "Now for the races On Saturday we visited the race course, on Bailey's Prairie, calling by the way on our friend, Riley, at the Hamilton place. En passant, McMellen, sugar maker to the "Retrieve," is making a beautiful article of sugar and lots of it too. We brought away a sample which we would gladly exhibit, and take pride in referring to Mac, as the maker, but the fact is,-ahem!-"in short" as Micawber would say, --we and our ? examined it till it vanished"[*Democrat & Planter* December 10, 1853].

³⁰ P. A. Champomier, Statement of the Sugar Crop Made in Louisiana in 1852-1859, With an Appendix, Cook, Young and Company, New Orleans, Louisiana. The appendix contains the Texas sugar crop.

in Texas.³¹ Front page news must have been quite embarrassing for the Hamilton and Jackson families though it would not be until 1859 the proper mortgages were filed with A. C. Spain.

In District Court, Brazoria County, Fall Term, A.D. 1855.

Albertus C. Spain, committee of the estate of

Mary M. McRa, plaintiff

Vs.

Abner Jackson, James Hamilton, Elizabeth M. Prioleau³² and John M. Bass³³, defendants
THE STATE OF TEXAS

To the Sheriff of the County of Brazoria,

Greeting:

WHEREAS on the 27th day of September, A.D. 1855, Albertus C. Spain, committee of the estate of Mary M. McRa, the above named plaintiff, filed in our Hon. District Court aforesaid in and for the county of Brazoria a petition complaining against Abner Jackson, James Hamilton, Elizabeth Prioleau and John M. Bass, the above defendants, and setting forth and alleging therein a cause of action against said defendants, of which the following is a brief statement to-wit:

Said petition complains of Abner Jackson of Brazoria county, Texas, and James Hamilton a resident of Beaufort District in the State of South Carolina, and Elizabeth M. Prioleau of Charleston in the State of South Carolina, John M. Bass a resident of Nashville, Tennessee, represents that the said Mrs. Mary M. McRa is the lawful owner of certain negro slaves in the possession of Abner Jackson, to-wit:- Pinky, Prince, Maria and her infant child whose name is not known to petitioner, John Jacob, Benoni, Middleton or Milton, Phebe, Fanny, Caesar, Clarisa, Henry, Lucy, Old Will, Elsy, Judy, David, Clarinda, Morris, Limus, Milly, Sarah, Hagar, Jim, Anthony, Annette, Johnson, January, Lotty, Jacques, Stephen and Nell. The said James Hamilton was about the year 1840 the confidential friend and agent of Mary McRa; that as such he received large sums of money from said Mrs. McRa for investment, and became indebted to her in a large amount for other moneys received from her; that this confidence and agency continued down to 1846 when Mrs. McRa became *non compos mentis*; that said James Hamilton about the beginning of the lunacy of Mrs. McRa purchased the above negro slaves with the funds of Mrs. McRa; that said Hamilton placed said slaves on the Retrieve plantation in Brazoria county; that said Hamilton held said slaves for some time in trust for the said Mrs. McRa, and on the 28th February 1846, conveyed said slaves or a part of them to-wit: January, Pinky, Maria, Prince, Limus, Sarah, Milly, Hagar, Jim, Letty, Anthony, Johnson, Annette, Jacques, Phebe, Benoni, Milton or Middleton, Caesar, Clarissa, Henry, Elsy, Judy, Stephen, Will and Fanny to Richard Singleton in trust for Mrs. McRa's use and benefit; that said slaves remained on said Retrieve plantation in Brazoria county; that said Hamilton always acknowledged the said slaves to be the property of Mrs. McRa, and promised to deliver them to petitioner whenever demanded; that said Retrieve plantation and many of the slaves and personal property on and attached to said plantation were for many years before the beginning of the present year, 1855, held in trust under certain stipulations by one Henry R. W. Hill of Louisiana, now deceased, and T. Lynch Hamilton for the benefit of the creditors of James Hamilton; that in 1854 said H. R. W. Hill departed this life; that about the

³¹ In a deposition filed June 28, 1856 in the suit of Albertus C. Spain vs. James Hamilton in the Circuit Court of the United States, for the District of Columbia James Hamilton testified that "Previous to the year 1846, this defendant became interested in one of finest and most promising sugar estates in Texas, called the Retrieve Plantation on Oyster Creek. It was supposed to be an investment surpassed by none other in the United States... The probable net income of the estate was never put down at less than \$50,000... But in this world, the best founded expectations are often defeated. The Land of immense fertility, being new, the cane overgrew and yielded more sap than sugar. The staple fell to three or four cents per pound, whilst the expense of sending to New York, including other incidental expenses, exceeded considerably a cent per pound. This continued for four or five years, until the estate became bankrupt...." [Ball, Hutchings, & Co. Records 82-0005 Box 1, File 2, Rosenberg Library, Galveston, Texas]

³² Sister of James Hamilton

³³ Executor for the Estate of Henry R. W. Hill who died in 1854.

beginning of 1855 said Retrieve plantation was sold at the suit of one of the creditors of said James Hamilton, and about the same time said John M. Bass in the capacity of executor of the will of said Henry R. W. Hill, or in the capacity of agent for the heirs of said Hill and for T. Lynch Hamilton assumed the control of said slaves and personal property on said Retrieve plantation and sold some of said property and removed a large number of said slaves beyond the limits of Texas; that in this condition of the affairs of said James Hamilton petitioner demanded said slaves the property of Mrs. McRa as aforesaid should be delivered to him. Said demand was made to said James Hamilton and said John M. Bass; that said slaves were placed by said John M. Bass in the possession of said Abner Jackson, who now holds possession of said slaves in the county of Brazoria and refuses to deliver them to petitioner. That Elizabeth M. Prioleau sets up some claim to said slaves, pretending to have purchased said slaves from said James Hamilton. That said Hamilton denies the right of Mrs. McRa to said slaves, and fraudulently and with intent to wrong and injure said Mrs. McRa colludes with said Elizabeth M. Prioleau and abets her attempt to get possession of said slaves. That the claim or pretended title of said Mrs. Elizabeth M. is not made in good faith, but with intent to defraud said Mrs. McRa. That the slaves named in said petition and not named in the deed from James Hamilton to Richard Singleton, trustee for Mrs. McRa on the 8th Feb'y 1846 are the offspring of those named in said conveyance of 8th Feb'y 1846. That said slaves were always known to the Retrieve plantation as "the Lundy gang." That Mrs. Mary M. McRa was declared a lunatic and incapable of transacting business by the proper court in 1846. That petitioner, Albertus C. Spain, was duly appointed committee or guardian of her estate. Said petition prays that the said Abner Jackson and James Hamilton and Elizabeth M. Prioleau and John M. Bass may be defendants in this suit and be cited in accordance with law to appear at the next term of the District Court for Brazoria county to answer said complaint. That the right of said Mary M. McRa to the slaves is said petition named, and their increase maybe established by judgment of said court and that she may have judgment that said Negroes and their increase be restored to her possession, or that their value be paid by said Abner Jackson, Hamilton and Bass or either of them. Said petition prays for judgment against said Abner Jackson for the hire of said Negroes for the time they shall have been in his possession and for costs. Said petitioner prays for all such orders and decrees interlocutory or final which may be necessary and proper in the premises....[*Democrat and Planter*, October 23, 1855]

In May 1854 Burrell McBride won a suit against Thomas Lynch Hamilton and James, Dick Hill & Company forcing them to sell the Retrieve. February 6, 1855 Henry D. Lesesne attorney for McBride gained control of the property at public auction [Deed: G 182/83]. During this year of instability at the plantation the property was leased out. Prospects for a good crop were high:

We understand that on the Retrieve plantation, in this county, they have began to take off the sugar crop, with a fair prospect of having as much cane as they can grind till New Years. The crop on the place is estimated at 700 hghds at least. [*Democrat and Planter*, October 23, 1855]

Paraphrasing a letter Jan. 23, 1856, Penelope Wharton to her brother Edward Johnson of South Carolina, John A. Wharton and two others³⁴ leased the Retrieve Plantation and made \$23,000 apiece. One thousand barrels of molasses more than paid their operating expenses leaving them 200 hogsheads of sugar each.³⁵ The plantation had produced 651 hogsheads of sugar in 1855, its peak year of production.³⁶ Lesesne offered the property for sale:

³⁴ John A. Wharton was Penelope's husband whose mother Sara Groce Wharton owned the Eagle Island Plantation while the two others were Abner Jackson and James Hamilton.

³⁵ Paraphrased letter copy Clarence Wharton Collection, Fondren Library, Rice University, Houston, Texas.

³⁶ P. A. Champomier, Statement of the Sugar Crop Made in Louisiana in 1852-1859, With an Appendix, Cook, Young and Company, New Orleans, Louisiana. The appendix contains the Texas sugar crop.

VALUABLE SUGAR ESTATE IN TEXAS FOR SALE

All that PLANTATION called the RETRIEVE, situated on Oyster Creek in the County of Brazoria, Texas, containing 3275 acres, more or less, and bounding on lands now or lately of Asa Mitchell, L. M. Wiley, and S. F. Austin. About 1000 acres are in cultivation, of which 500 acres are well stocked with sugar cane. On the premises are a sugar house, steam engine, mill and kettles, a dwelling house, and kitchen of brick, and negro cabins. The property is under lease, for the current year, and is to be delivered up at the end of the year in good condition for making a sugar crop next season. Possession to be delivered to the purchaser accordingly.

Terms-On third cash; residue {sic} in one, two, three, and four years in equal payments, bearing interest from time of sale, and secured by mortgage of the property; the buildings to be insured and the policy assigned as a further security.

Persons disposed to purchase, may treat with his Excellency, E.M. Pease, Governor of Texas, who is prepared to give full information as to the condition and value of the property, or with the subscriber.

October 16th Henry D. Lesesne, Charleston, S.C. [*Democrat and Planter*, October 23, 1855, Columbia, Texas]

Abner Jackson wrote to the Governor E. M. Pease and received a reply. In his response to the Governor on January 9, 1856, he implies that he had been leasing the Retrieve Plantation and raising sugar cane using his slaves.

Retrieve Plantation
Jany 9th 1856

Gov. E M Pease
Austin

Dear Sir,

I read your esteemed favor of 26th last informing me that you had mislaid a letter from me in reference to the sale or purchase of the Retrieve Plantation etc. In that letter I proposed to purchase the property on the following terms at the price of the McBride debt and on the terms set forth in Mr. Lesesnes advertisement.

Now to be more explicit I propose to purchase the property and pay the McBride debt reserving the amount to myself that may be collected from the trust Estate or I will pay you Rent for the next year (commencing at the time of the expiration of my present Lease and same conditions that I have for the present). I will give Thirty five (3500) Hundred Dollars as rent. I will be done making sugar in about 8 or ten days and if I am not to occupy it for this year I will be under the necessity of taking the Hands to another place, and in that event this place would (if not cultivated) depreciate very much the cane would be Lost etc. I wrote Mr. Lesesne at the time that I wrote you and have not had a word from him. I fear that my Letter has miscarried and it is now too Late to write to him. As soon as I am done I will be compelled to draw off my hands unless I can hear from you or Mr. Lesesne. I wish you to be certain to write by return mail.

With kinds regds I remn very truly yrs

A. Jackson³⁷

Abner Jackson who had been prospering on the Lake Jackson plantation mortgaged the property from Henry D. Lesesne October 13, 1856 for \$46,042.88 [Deeds: G 751/52, H 132/33]. He quickly sold half interest back to Elizabeth Hamilton [Deed: H 135/37]. Oliver P. Hamilton was forced to leave Texas and return to Virginia for health reasons.³⁸ Thomas Lynch Hamilton would now come to Texas and control the Hamilton family's half interest.

On August 1, 1856, the state had passed legislation that produced another frenzy of activity among the planters along the Brazos:

³⁷ Abner Jackson to Elisha M. Pease, January 9, 1856 Incoming Correspondence, Governor Elisha M. Pease Records (RG 304) Archives Division-Texas State Library.

³⁸ Oliver P. Hamilton died of a pulmonary illness June 1857.

Our Legislature has passed the River and Loan Bills. It has offered four dollars to every one dollar that is subscribed by individuals, for the purpose of removing obstructions in our navigable streams, and that so soon as \$1,000.00 are subscribed, and 5 per cent of it paid in cash, the work shall commence, proceeding from the mouth of the river upward...Now, \$50,000.00 properly expended, will certainly make the Brazos navigable for the light draft boats, at least three fourths of the year, from the canal to Washington...[*Washington American*, August 13, 1856].

An amendment to the original bill spelled out the appropriations for the Brazos River including the Retrieve Plantation:

Oyster Creek Canal to Retrieve	\$ 2,833
Brazos River from mouth to Washington	50,000
Galveston Bay to Canal and Red Fish Reef	23,000 ³⁹

The citizens of Brazoria County met August 16, 1856, in Brazoria to take “preparatory steps towards receiving some of the benefits of the River Bill” and to “receive subscriptions from the citizens of Brazoria county for the purpose of improving the navigation over the Bar at the mouth of the Brazos river”[*Democrat & Planter*, August 19, 1856].

On September 29, a river convention was held at Bellville with delegates from Washington, Austin, Fort Bend and Brazoria counties. John A. Wharton,⁴⁰ H. Cone, John Adriance,⁴¹ S. S. Perry⁴² and Guy M. Bryan⁴³ were the delegates from Brazoria County and Guy M. Bryan was appointed president. The counties united in their efforts and resolved to first, clear a channel through all the shoals in the river up to Washington-on-the-Brazos; second, they would contract a company to clear all the snags and other obstructions from the mouth of the river to the town of Washington; and third, that each county should raise \$3125 to make them eligible to receive the \$50,000 from the state. Also, John A. Wharton was to correspond with the proper state officials with the view of procuring the use of a snag boat [*Democrat & Planter*, October 14, 1856].

With the potential of receiving \$2,833 for the canal to Retrieve and portions of the \$23,000 for improving the canal system to Galveston Bay, the Hamilton-Jackson Canal or Brazos Canal Company saw new life. On the October 7, an “Internal Improvement Meeting” was held in Brazoria. General James Hamilton addressed the meeting and introduced Captain Abel Hawley, recently from Milwaukee, who had 29 years experience in digging canals, and had at his and Abner Jackson’s request examined the several proposed routes for canals from Galveston Bay to the Brazos River:

...Capt. Hawley first estimates the cost by sections of finishing the canal by Bastrop Bayou to the Brazos, which was commenced several years ago by Gen. Hamilton and Maj. Jackson. As nearly as we can judge, by adding the estimated cost of the several sections of this canal, the whole cost of its completion will be something over \$100,000. Capt. H. then proceeds to give his opinion as to what will be the cost of finishing the canal near the mouth of the Brazos, which cannot now be successfully navigated during

³⁹ S. G. Reed, *A History of Texas Railroads* 1941: 40

⁴⁰ John A. Wharton was the son of William H. and Sarah Ann Wharton of the Eagle Island Plantation.

⁴¹ John Adriance was a merchant from Columbia.

⁴² Stephen S. Perry was the owner of Peach Point Plantation.

⁴³ Guy M. Bryan was son of Emily Austin Bryan Perry.

northers and low tides, though, at other times light draft steamers and other craft are constantly navigating it. Capt. H. says, very truly, we believe that this canal, that is, the Galveston Bay and Brazos River Canal, furnishes, at present, a very precarious navigation, liable to be interrupted by low tides and high winds. He estimates the cost of finishing this canal as to give it five feet of water at all times at \$150,000, which we believe, is just about three times the cost estimated by Maj. Stein, who was employed to examine and report upon this route, of completing this canal from the commencement...[*Galveston Weekly News*, October 21, 1856].

It was evident to this group, though it was indispensable for the development of the Brazos valley to have a cheap uninterrupted navigational route to the market, that the sum of money appropriated by the legislature was too small. They resolved to go ahead with plans for clearing the river from the mouth to Washington but would wait on recommendations for which canal route they would approve. James Hamilton was still in great confidence of the route proposed by Captain Hawley:

...I am convinced that the canal could be finished in three years, probably in two, by the imposition of a tax of 12 cents and ½ on \$100 of value on the property of the County for 15 years...
 ...it can be built for the estimated cost (\$100,000), as I know an individual who would contract to finish it for that sum...
 ...address ...the Pres & Directors, of the Galveston & Brazos Canal Company, requesting them...whether they are prepared to furnish uninterrupted navigation with an adequate depth at all stages of the tide from Galveston to the Brazos...
 ...the plan I have proposed ...meets with the unqualified support and approval of Govr. Pease...
 ...I do not think the Galveston & Brazos Company will grieve very much at our probable competition as I presume that they are quite willing to suspend all expense & operation...[James F. Perry Papers, Letter James Hamilton to Stephen S. Perry, October 28, 1856].

The feasibility of the Hamilton-Jackson Canal was brought to an end due to the untimely death of James Hamilton⁴⁴. On November 15, 1857, Hamilton was on board the steamship *Opelousas*, from New Orleans Berwick Bay to Galveston, when it was in collision with the steamship *Galveston* of the same line, off the coast of Louisiana and sank during heavy weather. The crews of both vessels were accused of manslaughter for the deaths of 20-25 passengers, Hamilton among them:

...Mr. R. B. Allen, of Bastrop, who was so fortunate as to preserve his whole family, consisting of his mother, brother and two servants, reports that, when the hurricane deck

⁴⁴ Shortly before James Hamilton's death he had the opportunity to visit Eagle Island Plantation, home of Sarah Wharton. "Not knowing the best road to take, there were two leading from the Lake Jackson Plantation, he called at Major Abner Jackson's, who sent a negro along as a guide. General Hamilton was riding ahead, and the road forked on the prairie, one going through the bottom and the other through the prairie. The negro failed to note which fork the General took, and he went one road while the General took the other. When the negro arrived at the Wharton residence, he went in to see whether the General had arrived. On looking, he saw the General in the parlor talking to Mrs. Wharton. The negro bowed and said, "I see, Marse General, you is here." The General arose. He, too, made a stately bow and said, "Yes, and no thanks to you, Sir." [Abner J. Strobel, *The Old Plantations and Their Owners of Brazoria County Texas* 1930: 33].

was under water, as he was engaged in fastening a life-preser on his mother, Gen. Hamilton, one of whose arms was disabled by paralysis,⁴⁵ came to him with a life preserver and requested him to buckle it on him. This he promised to do as soon as he had attended to his family; but the General went off in quest of other assistance, and was not seen afterwards...[*Galveston Weekly News*, December 1, 1857 & December 15, 1857].⁴⁶

After the death of their patriarch the Hamilton family continued with their resolve to make Retrieve their financial savior. The 1858 tax records note T. Lynch Hamilton had 106 slaves working the plantation and 305 hogsheads of sugar were produced that year. In 1859 Abner Jackson mortgaged 14 slaves on the Retrieve to Hamilton P. Bee of South Carolina for \$12,000 and finally the group of 32 slaves know as the Lundy Gang along with both Jackson and Elizabeth Hamilton's interests in the Retrieve to A. C. Spain for \$22,000 [Deeds: J 89/91 J 118/19]. May 29, 1860 Jackson mortgaged his half of the Retrieve now containing 4250 acres with the sugar house, mill, and machinery and all the slaves on the property to Ball, Hutchings & Company of Galveston for \$34,000 [Deed: J 478/83]. Elizabeth Hamilton executed a mortgage on equal terms June 1, 1860 [Deed: J 490/92]. Ball, Hutchings & Company would be able to put up enough capital to cover the operating expenses for each year and collect their percentage from the crops produced sold through their company. Abner Strobel though only born in this time period described the Retrieve as "one of the finest plantations in the county. All the improvements were of brick. A two-story brick residence, brick cabins, a large brick sugar house with double set of kettles, a large brick oven to cook for the slaves. It was indeed a well equipped plantation."⁴⁷

In accordance with the family trust which he was administering T. Lynch Hamilton kept record of the Retrieve during these years and according to the tax records maintained 106 slaves on the property through 1861⁴⁸ and the beginning of the Civil War. The agreement between T. Lynch and his mother was that "in consideration of the said T. Lynch Hamilton furnishing a greater amount of labor on said Plantation, and his own personal services as Manager and Director of the same and the said Elizabeth Hamilton furnishing the half of said Plantation (Abner Jackson owning the other half) the said T. Lynch Hamilton was to receive for his said services and the services of his Negroes the one fourth part of the net proceeds of the produce of the said Plantation, he paying one fourth of the expenses".⁴⁹ In 1858, the first full year of his reporting a quarter interest returned \$3445.88 from 282 barrels of molasses, 142 hogsheads of sugar, 44 bales of cotton, and 37 hides while his quarter expenses amounted to \$1024.45. In 1859 this increased to \$8905.11 on 260 bales of cotton, 793 barrels of molasses, 16 barrels of syrup, 243 hogsheads of sugar⁵⁰, and 1 keg of

⁴⁵ This must have been due to some injury incurred during the collision of the two vessels.

⁴⁶ Abner J. Strobel had related in his work "when all had put on their life belts, there was one lady on board who had none. General Hamilton immediately gave her his and went down with the ship [Abner J. Strobel, *The Old Plantations and Their Owners of Brazoria County Texas* 1930: 33].

⁴⁷ Abner J. Strobel, *The Old Plantations and Their Owners of Brazoria County Texas* 1930: 32.

⁴⁸ This appears to be the total of slaves with Abner Jackson and T. Lynch Hamilton each supplying about 50+ slaves.

⁴⁹ Probate Case 829 Elizabeth Hamilton, Brazoria County Courthouse, Angleton, Texas.

⁵⁰ P. A. Champomier, *Statement of the Sugar Crop Made in Louisiana in 1852-1859* With Appendix lists 305 hogsheads of sugar produced at Retrieve in 1858. This sugar would have been sold at the very end of 1858 or through the first 6 months of 1859 with only 243 hogsheads listed in 1859. There are discrepancies between the reporting of the two sources.

butter with expenses of \$2756.02. An article from a local newspaper during the 1858 season indicated almost 400 hogsheads of sugar were going to be produced:

- Leaving the Bynum place we crossed Bailey's prairie and visited the Retrieve. Here we found our young friend Andrew Jackson in charge. He was just in the midst of a break down-not one of those fancy "break downs" so common at this season of the year, on Oyster Creek, but some unfortunate accident to the mill. But we learned that it was not very serious one, however, and that they would be able to fire up again in a few hours. After partaking of an excellent dinner, at the sugar house, we took a peep into the purgery, where we found some 250 hhd's of good sugar. We were informed that the crop on the place would amount to about 400. Passing down towards Lake Jackson, we met our old friend the Major. He informed us that on his three places, the Darrington, Retrieve and home place, he would make about 900 hhd's-a right smart chance of sweetening for one man to put up. Passing Lake Jackson, we came to Mrs. Wharton's plantation, over which our friend Maxey is the presiding genius. Visiting the sugar house, we found Mac. at his post watching the kettles. Of course everybody knows Mac, who is one of the oldest and best sugar boilers in the county. He is making an excellent article of sugar, and, as he has a right, feels proud of it. They finished grinding on Saturday, making about 270,000 lbs. Spending the night with friend Wharton, we started for home next morning, making it in our way to pass thro the plantation of Messrs. Staten & Cloman, whom we found in full blast. Their crop is turning out much better than they had anticipated. They have already bout 90 hhd's out, also have made about 50 bales of cotton. [*Democrat and Planter*, December 21, 1858, Columbia, Texas]

The 1860 Agricultural Census lists 950 acres improved with the value of the plantation at \$67,300 and the farm machinery valued at \$20,000. The livestock on the plantation were listed as 4 horses, 60 mules, 50 milk cows, 30 oxen, and 1900 head of cattle. The produce for 1859 was 6000 bushels of corn, 50 bushels of Irish potatoes, 500 bushels sweet potatoes, 250 pounds of butter, 20 tons of hay, 200 bales of cotton, 226 hogsheads of sugar, and 32,000 gallons of molasses. Continuing in 1860 and thru part of 1864 produce from the Retrieve was sold through Ball, Hutchings & Company:

Ball, Hutchings & Co.

Year	Bales Cotton	Hogsheads Sugar	Barrels Molasses	Hides	¼ Net	¼ Expenses
1860	35	178	708	15	\$5475.94	\$1495.05
1861	176	181	284	57	\$2050.07	\$3158.49
1862	None listed					\$1693.93
1863	43	37	376		\$9971.39	\$1052.28
1864		78	91		\$5019.71	\$2558.70

In 1864 several products were sold for the first time. Four barrels of sulphur from an unknown source and brandy, alcohol, and rum from a still house recently completed at Retrieve added to the revenues. Brandy and rum would continue to be sold after the Civil War. Ball, Hutchings & Company removed from Galveston in the later part of the Civil War and produce was then sold through A. Sessums and T. W. House of Houston, Texas and locally by Jean Proua and Joseph D'Arcy through much of 1865. While bringing in ~\$4000 for his part T. Lynch Hamilton was still in the red for ~ \$2500.⁵¹

In August 1861 Abner Jackson died and his son John C. Jackson managed his estate through the Civil War (See Appendix D for Abner Jackson's ½ of Retrieve at his death). Also during the Civil War Elizabeth Hamilton passed away leaving T. Lynch Hamilton in charge of

⁵¹ See Appendix C

the estate in Texas.⁵² Though Jackson technically owned half of Retrieve it appears he left the managing of the plantation to Hamilton. After the Civil War T. Lynch Hamilton had to post bond to be executor of his mother's estate in the sum of \$70,000 [See Appendix E]. The inventory for the Estate of Elizabeth Hamilton lists 4200 acres of land with her half interest valued at \$21250:

One half of 58 Mules	\$1000
One “ “ 10 Yoke Oxen	150
One “ “ 6 Horses	100
One “ “ 1000 Bushels Corn	500
One “ “ 6 Stacks of Fodder	30
One “ “ 10 Cane Carts	200
One “ “ 2 Ox Carts	25
One “ “ 60 Hghds Sugar	2700
One “ “ 35 Bbls Molasses	350
One “ “ 45 Bales Cotton	2250
One “ “ Farming Tools on Retrieve Plantation	<u>500</u>
	\$29105 ⁵³

The 1865 crop sold in 1866 yielded 69 hogsheads of sugar, 40 barrels of molasses, and 29 bales of cotton. Locally brandy, sugar, butter, corn, meal, and lumber were sold with total proceeds for the year reaching ~\$16000 in paper currency and gold. The local planters' distrust of U.S. paper currency at the time made most exchange their currency for gold at \$1.45 exchange rate. Hamilton's tally sheets listed exchanges in currency and specie separate and he actually reduced all his currency to gold so deep was his distrust possibly caused by the rapid inflation of Confederate currency during the Civil War. Turning all his currency credits to gold reduced his revenues to ~\$11,500 in specie for the year. The net proceeds for the plantation amounted to only ~\$1600 without any payments being listed to mortgage holders. Interestingly the quarterly wages paid to the freedmen \$920.76, \$1089.73, \$1193.75, and \$2603.58⁵⁴ are not that high in comparison to the mortgage notes held on the slaves before the Civil War. Of course, the total number actually working would be much less but Hamilton's tally sheets do not list specific numbers although he mentions a plantation book that carried the exact names and numbers which we do not have. T. Lynch's son John H., a Confederate veteran, helped manage the Retrieve during this period.⁵⁵ Also T. Lynch's brother Henry C. Hamilton relocated to Retrieve.

In 1867 most of the sales from Retrieve were not listed.⁵⁶ A written report to the Probate Court on the condition of the Jackson Estate, filed by the County Clerk on May 3, 1867 gives the reason why:

⁵² Dec. 1862

⁵³ Elizabeth Hamilton Probate Case 829 Brazoria County Court House, Angleton, Texas.

⁵⁴ The 4th quarter would have been very labor intensive harvesting the sugar cane and running the sugar mill. Additional labor to the freedmen listed was hired from John C. Jackson's and William Ward's labor force on the neighboring plantations during this period.

⁵⁵ John H. Hamilton's expenses for trips to Galveston and Houston are listed in the probate ledger.

⁵⁶ In an affidavit to the Probate Court T. L. Hamilton states that he was unable to make sugar for one year and that he incurred additional debt to Ball, Hutchings & Company to repair the machinery. [Probate Case 829 Elizabeth Hamilton, Brazoria County Courthouse, Angleton, Texas].

“He [John C. Jackson] shows that the year 1866 was one of unprecedented disaster to the cropping interest of this county. That he had a great many hands employed off and on during said year on the Darrington plantation but that he only succeeded in saving about 75 hogsheads of sugar and 125 barrels of molasses and syrup and a very little cotton, 25 bales of much he has shipped and sold and credited in his accounts... and estimates there are 30 bales remaining.”

“Petitioner hardly knows in which accounts to report the proceeds of Lake Jackson Plantation for reasons known to your, but he shows that he leased said place to Kennicott and others and that he shows that on settlement with them received 4 bales cotton and about 900 bushels of corn, that the cotton has been shipped through Thompson and McMurphy and is not yet reported sold...”In regard to Retrieve Plantation that in addition to the ordinary or prevailing disaster to the cotton crop last season that the sugar crop was entirely lost on the Retrieve by the explosion of the steam boilers connected with the sugar mill so injuring the machinery as to render it impossible to save the crop then on hand. That a large planting of cane was made, and that said plantation is being conducted this year with every promise of success... is under the actual supervision of T. Lynch Hamilton...”

“The Lake Jackson Plantation mill figure with the estate of Andrew Jackson deceased, but for the information of the court, petitioner sates that he is employing about the number of 30 hands on the Lake Jackson plantation and considers his present prospect good for crops of corn and cotton,”...[Abner Jackson Probate Case 764, Brazoria County Courthouse, Angleton, Texas]

In the spring of 1868 128 hogsheads of sugar, 20 barrels of syrup, 20 barrels of molasses, 25 barrels of sugar, 178 Pkg’s of molasses, and 182 hides were sold through Ball, Hutchings & Company with other produce sold to Lubbock. The total income from January 1867 to June 1868 listed amounted to \$26919.49 in U.S. currency. His labor costs in 1867 were in gold \$1290.50 1st qtr., \$1717.00 2nd qtr. and \$6332.99 for the 3rd and 4th qtrs. combined, a substantial increase over the year before.⁵⁷

October 1868 T. Lynch Hamilton presented his final account to the probate court. He conceded that the estate had been in debt almost \$50,000 to Ball, Hutchings & Company. The previous month he had been forced to sell his family’s half interest in Retrieve at public auction. Ball, Hutchings & Company purchased the whole of Retrieve at \$5.00 an acre with all the improvements and crops thereon for \$16,375 with half going each to the Jackson and Hamilton estates.

T. Lynch Hamilton, John H. Hamilton, and Henry C. Hamilton appear to have all remained on the Retrieve and managed the plantation for Ball, Hutchings & Company through at least 1877.⁵⁸ In a letter Henry C. Hamilton reported problems with the sugar crop, difficulties with worm-eaten cotton and unruly convicts hired to replace the slaves, supposedly cursing the day he left Savannah for Texas eleven years before.⁵⁹ Convict labor was utilized in the mid 1870’s with Ball, Hutchings & Company leasing labor from Ward, Dewey & Company who held the primary lease from the state beginning April 29, 1871.⁶⁰ January 1, 1878 to November 1, 1880 the major lease was held by E. H. Cunningham & L. A. Ellis. During this time there were 42 convicts leased by Ball, Hutchings & Company from them.⁶¹ The lease over the next two years was for 60 convicts at \$15 per month for each convict with 53 convicts listed on the

⁵⁷ Probate Case 829 Elizabeth Hamilton, Brazoria County Courthouse, Angleton, Texas.

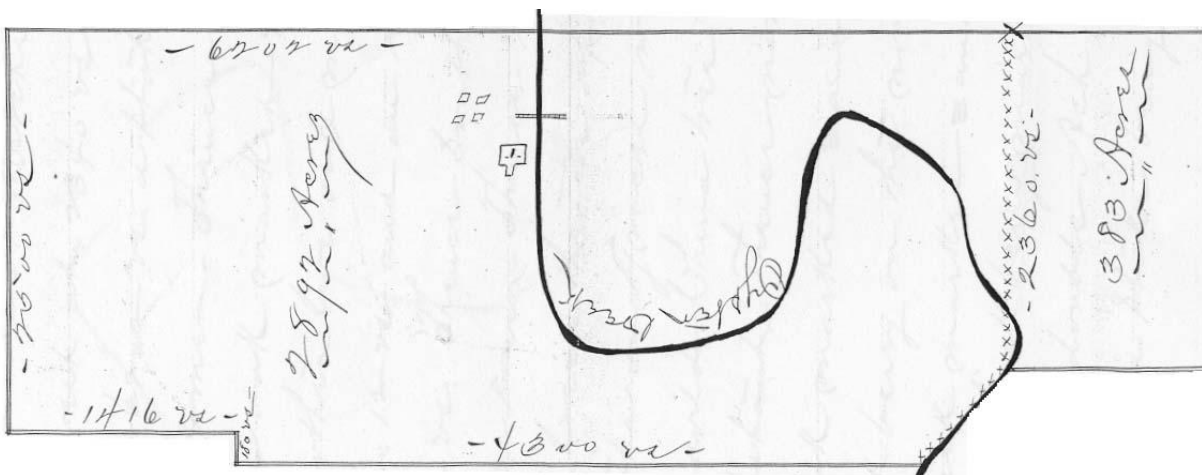
⁵⁸ They removed to Avery Island, Louisiana according to Strobel. T. Lynch Hamilton died 28 November 1894 in Louisiana.

⁵⁹ Robert Tinkler, *James Hamilton of South Carolina*, p. 267.

⁶⁰ Donald R. Walker, *Penology For Profit*, Texas A&M University Press, College Station Texas, 1988, p.31. Governor’s Records, State Archives, “Report of the Lessees of the Texas State Penitentiary, April, 1876”, p.28.

⁶¹ Governor’s Records, State Archives, “Biennial Reports of the Directors and Superintendent of the Texas State Penitentiary at Huntsville, Texas with the Report of the Prison Physician, 1878-1880”, p.51.

property at the time of inspection.⁶² Ball, Hutchings & Co. continued to add parcels of land to the Retrieve purchasing 1700 acres just east of the Retrieve from Abner Jackson's estate in 1872 and 2165 acres just south from Stephen S. Perry's Estate in 1879. [Deeds: N 62/63 & S 27]



Survey of Retrieve for Civil Suit Asenith J. Groce et al vs Ball, Hutchings & Company No. 3848 May, 1881 [Ball, Hutchings & Company Records 82-0005, Box 2, File 2]⁶³

The Ball, Hutchings & Co. continued to produce sugar on the property and from 1891-1897 they leased at least 60 convicts each year from the Texas Prison Commission.⁶⁴ After the turn of the century the Ball heir Nellie Ball League and her husband had had their fill of the Retrieve and were trying to get the Hutchings and Sealy heirs to buy them out.

... You will notice that said plantation owes an indebtedness of about \$3000, and the only thing to show for it, that I have been able to find out, is some old cows, and a few pigs.

With respect to this place, I have discussed the matter with my wife, and she as well as myself are unwilling for this place to run as the accounts show, and in fact, shall insist that the property be sold at whatever price it will bring, or that the place be divided.

It is the same old story of good money going after bad, and I can prove through old statements, that this place has been a sink hole for money for forty years....⁶⁵

Receipts from 1901 through the first part of 1904 note that sugar produced at Retrieve was being sold through the Lake Jackson Sugar Company which was managing the Lake Jackson sugar mill and R. H. Stanger was leasing part of the property probably for cattle grazing.⁶⁶ Though unable to turn a profit on the books Nellie and her husband were not able to convince the rest of the heirs to sell.

An article in *The Angleton Times* from 1908 notes that the Retrieve was to be rented:

⁶² Governor's Records, State Archives, "Biennial Reports of the Directors and Superintendent of the Texas State Penitentiary at Huntsville, Texas with the Report of the Prison Physician and Chaplain, 1880-1882", p.8 & 36.

⁶³ This suit was brought by the last surviving Jackson heir, Asenith Jackson Groce and her husband Jared Fulton Groce. Notice mansion is gone but the sugar mill is still in approximately the same position as 1848 survey.

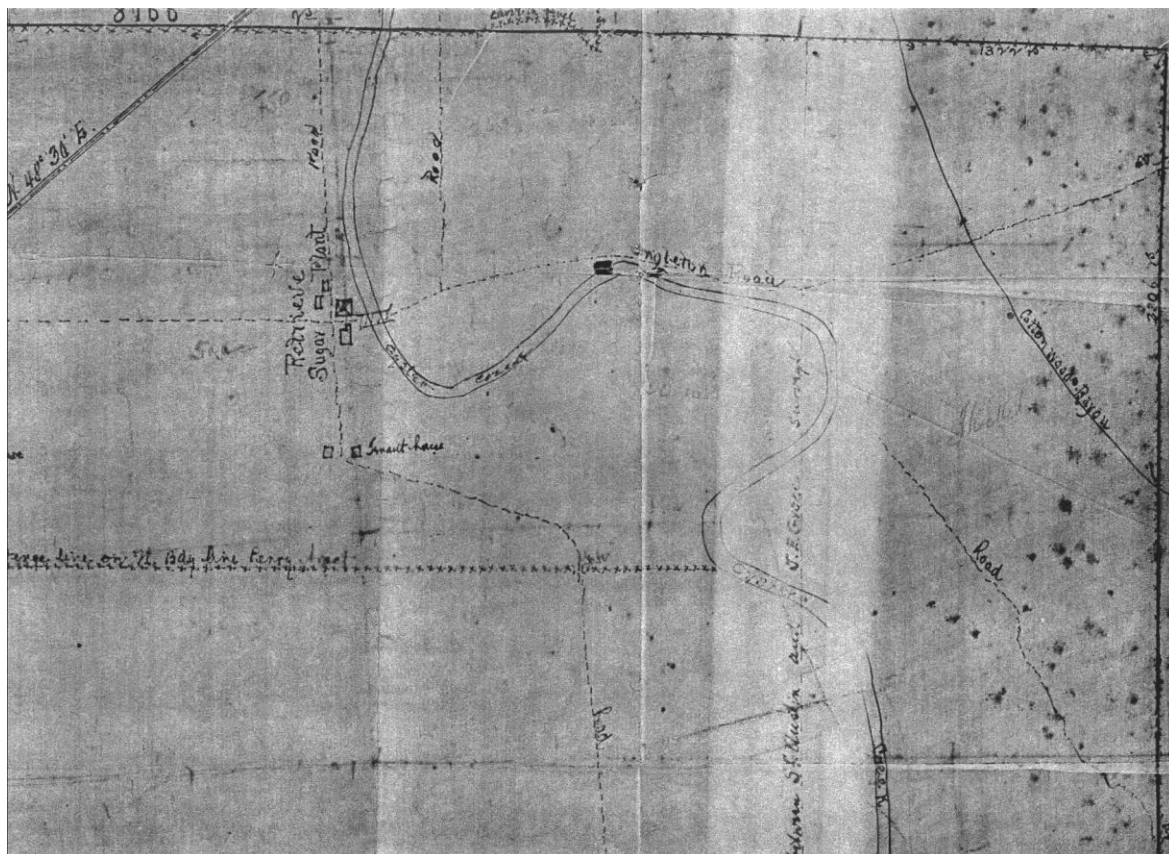
⁶⁴ Ball, Hutchings, & Co. Records 28-0037-0041, Rosenberg Library, Galveston, Texas

⁶⁵ J. C. League to Mr. W. S. Davis, Jr., July 26, 1904.[Ball, Hutchings, & Co. Records 82-0005 Box 2, File 10, Rosenberg Library, Galveston, Texas]

⁶⁶ Ball, Hutchings, & Co. Records 82-0005 Box 2, File 10, Rosenberg Library, Galveston, Texas

...The great Retrieve Plantation is to be offered for rent, in reasonable sized tracts, to good tenants. For a number of years most of this wonderfully rich land has been lying idle... all in fine condition for the plow, every acre of it rich to prodigality...Countless thousands of tons of sugar, cotton and corn have been produced on the Retrieve, in years gone by. The same soil-strength is there now that made the place famous then. Since the new Brownsville railroad has tapped the plantation the matter of transportation is no longer the serious question that it used to be.

Manager Martin can be seen on the place...[*The Angleton Times*, October 30, 1908]



October 26, 1908 Survey by E. T. Atkinson Jr.

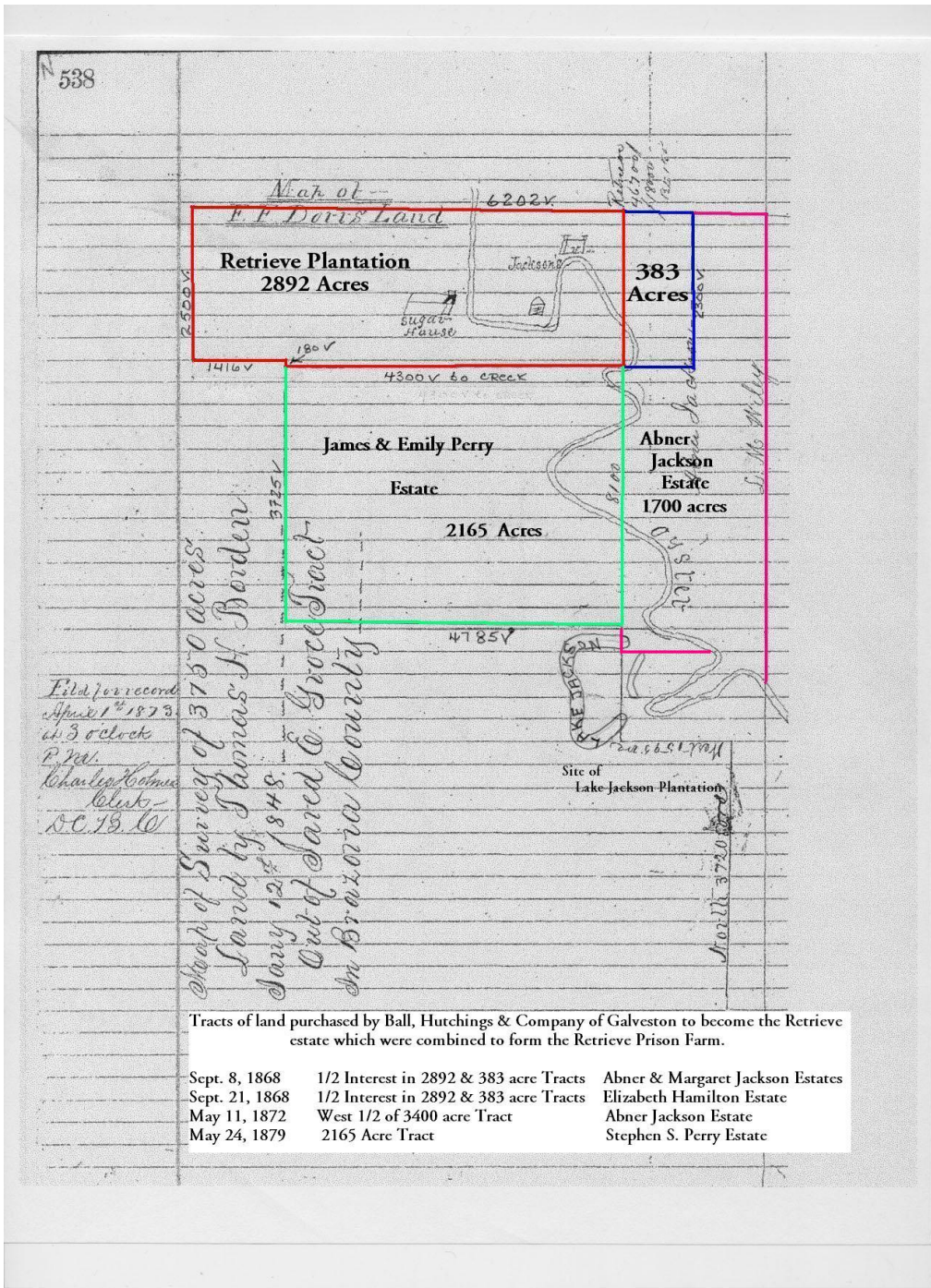
Reproduced From Holdings of the Texas State Archives⁶⁷

Another article in *The Angleton Times* a few years later confirms that sugar cane was still being grown on the Retrieve:

The big sugar mill on the Retrieve plantation was started yesterday. It will be kept humming from this time on until the great cane crop is taken care of. We call it a sugar mill, and it is, but this year only syrup will be made. This is found to be more profitable than to reduce the product to sugar. The Retrieve brand of ribbon cane syrup commands a high price...The crop is fine this year. The tonnage is satisfactory, and the yield in saccharine is well above the average. A big cotton crop and a big cane crop puts the Retrieve in fine shape this year. [*The Angleton Times*, November 1, 1912]

⁶⁷ Notice what may be a structure in the upper bend where the 1848 Borden survey located the mansion and there is not a railroad spur going to the sugar mill complex..

Although reports were more promising December 1816 all the heirs each sold their 1/3's for \$50,000 each to E. B. Mills who was immediately filed a quick claim and turned the property over to T. Martin and his wife Aline of Fort Bend County.⁶⁸ The Texas Prison Commission bought the Retrieve February 1, 1918 for \$320,879, making T. Martin a very shrewd real estate buyer or someone with a friend in the know [Deed: 145 242/44].



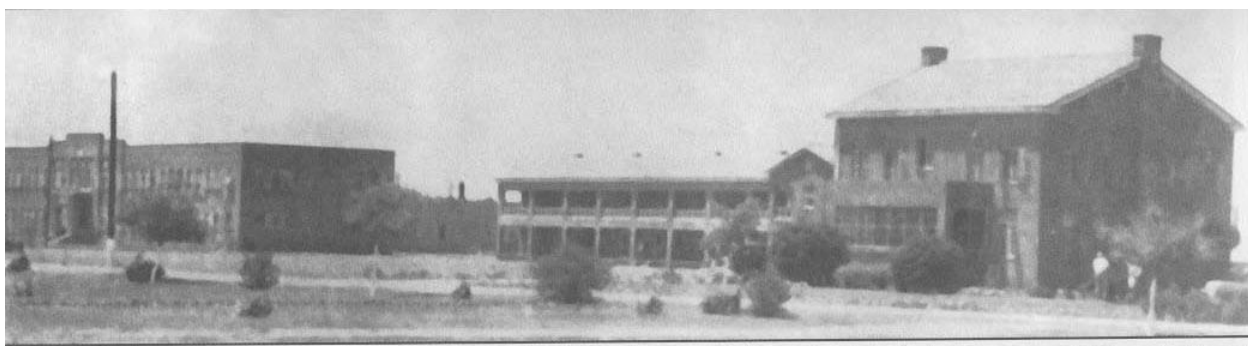
⁶⁸ There is reference in the deed transactions that the property was leased to the Texas Prison System for the past year.

Initially the state sent its most desperate criminals to Retrieve. The initial structures built on the prison farm included a wooden barracks for the inmates and the warden's house which was located on the right side of the road on a curve of Oyster Creek about a half-mile from the entrance.⁶⁹



Photo of Warden's Home
Courtesy of Lon Bennett Glenn or I. K. Kelly Jr. family

The construction of a more modern building made of brick was begun in 1934 with completion in 1937. The warden's home and the wooden barracks were torn down.

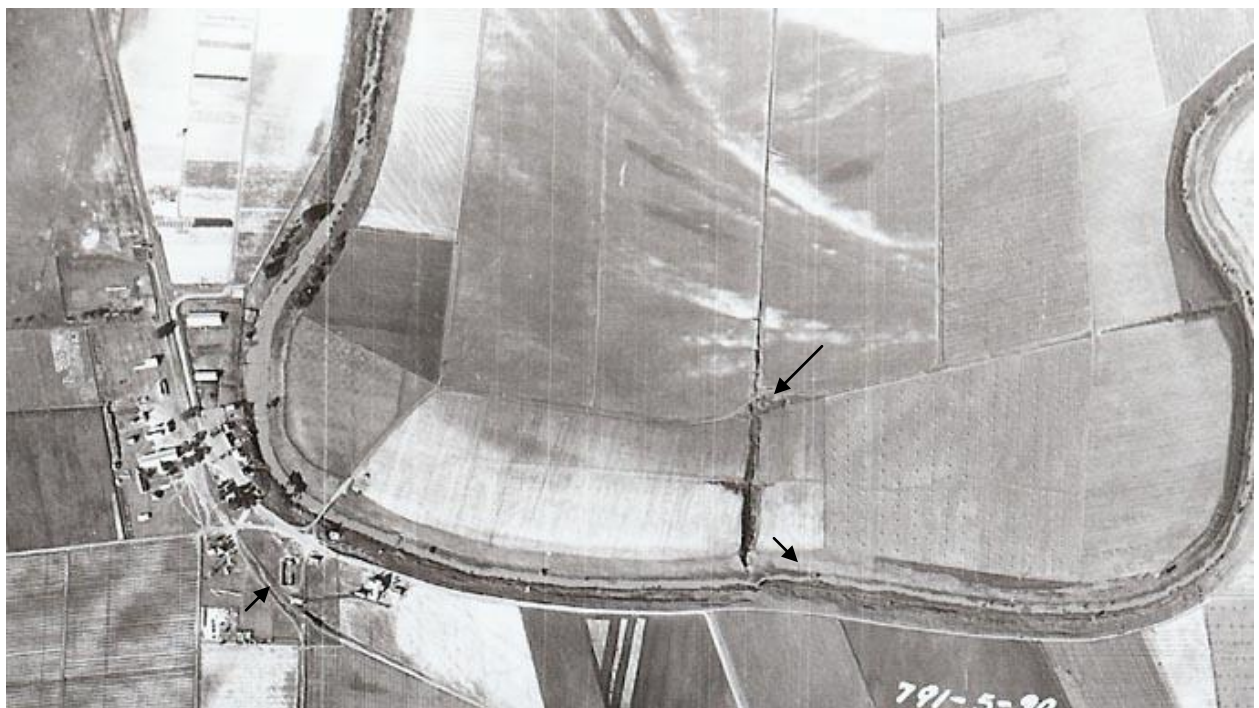


Far left: "New Retrieve Unit Building" Center: Wooden Bachelor Officers' Quarters
Far Right: Brick Warden's Residence circa 1838 Courtesy of Lon Bennett Glenn or I. K. Kelly Jr. family

⁶⁹ Lon Bennett Glenn, The Largest Hotel Chain in Texas, Eakin Press, Austin, Texas 2001, p.61

In 1932 or 1933, the old “Columbia Tap Railroad⁷⁰” spur that ran off the main line to the old unit was taken up. The rusty old steam locomotive was pushed to the end of the spur track where the convicts dug a huge hole. The train engine was pushed into the hole and buried. Located alongside the old spur line were landfills for trash including plates, silverware, tools, and farming equipment.⁷¹

Aerial Photograph November 4, 1930
Tobin Aerial
Prepared by P2 Energy Solutions, San Antonio, Texas



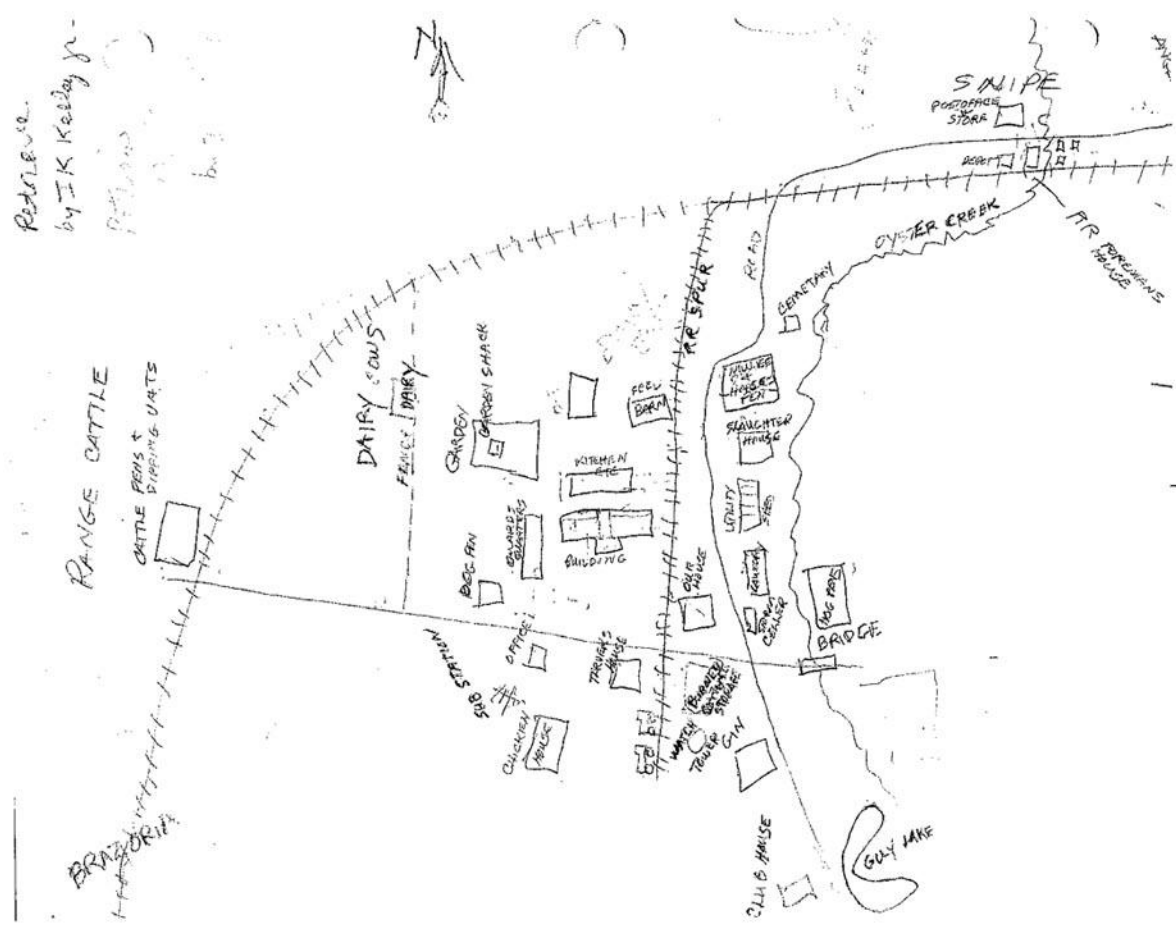
Arrows Indicate Possible Plantation Structure Locations

⁷⁰ Houston, Tap and Brazoria Railroad ran from Houston to the east bank of the Brazos directly across from East Columbia.

⁷¹ Lon Bennett Glenn, The Largest Hotel Chain in Texas, Eakin Press, Austin, Texas 2001, p. 62.

Another area frequented during the days of prohibition was the "Retrieve Hunting Club", located on Club Lake which was on the Perry Estate Tract just north of present day Lake Jackson. The hunting club was a two-story L-shaped wooden building with six rooms upstairs containing one room large enough for gaming tables. A still produced "the best sugarcane sour mash whiskey".⁷²

Hand Drawing of the Retrieve Layout Circa 1930's by I. K. Kelley Jr.



The Retrieve was later modernized and moved further south along Oyster Creek to its present location. The Texas Department of Corrections renamed the prison the Wayne Scott Unit and continues to oversee its operation.⁷³

⁷² Ibid., p. 55-56.
⁷³ Ibid., p. 61.

Aerial Photograph 2004 U. S. Geological Survey



Appendix A

Schedule A

Statement of the mortgages that exist on the Retrieve Plantation in Brazoria County, Texas.

1 st Mortgage in favor of R. & D. Mills with int calculated to the 1 st of June 1848	\$2,823.96
2 nd Mortgage in favor of S. M. Westervelt for his present wife late Mrs. Stewart interest calculated to 1 st June 1848	\$667.91
Judgments	
3 rd Henry H. Williams & Co. vs. Abner Jackson with interest calculated to 1 st June 1848. Fed District Court of U.S. at Galveston, Texas	\$3,112.93
4 th James Reed vs. Abner Jackson with interest to the 8 th April 1848 In the Superior Court of Brazoria Cty, Texas	\$3,403.87
5 th James F. Perry & wife vs. Abner Jackson with interest to the 1 st of May 1848 in Superior Court of Brazoria County, Texas	<u>\$5,942.99</u>
Amounting together to the sum of	\$15,957.66
[Brazoria County Deed Record E: 56]	

Appendix B
Lundy Gang
February 11, 1843

January	Toby	Caesar
Pinkey	Hager	Clarissa
Maria	Jim	Henry
Prince	Lettice	Kate
Limus	Anthony	Phoebe
Sarah	Johnson	Owen
Miley	Annette	Fanny
George	Elsy	Benozza
Harriet	Judy	Milton
Will	Charlotte	

List from affidavit by Elizabeth L. Prioleau Ball, Hutchings, & Co. Records 82-0005 Box 1, File 2, Rosenberg Library, Galveston, Texas

List of the Negroes on the Retrieve Plantation Oyster Creek Brazoria Texas to whom belonging or to whom mortgaged.

Robert- Driver	Willingly	Mortgage to the So Western Rail Road Bank of Charleston So. Ca These Negroes are generally known on the plantation as the Rice Hope People
Lucy-Nurse	Smith	
Sam	William	
June & Child	Sophy	
Willie	Prince	
Charlotte	Francis	
Mathis	Judy & Infant	
Billy	Nancy	
Dolly		

Tom	Nev Parul	Sue	Henry	These Negroes belong to William Middleton of So Carolina held by me.
Martha	Jim	Will	Tyra	
Frank	John	Caroline	Sally	
Gay	Daphne	Fanny	Bob	
Mary	Balan	Old Andrew	Racheal	
Scipio	Sinces	Peggy	Delia	
Sue	Doll	Moses	Nancy	
Daniel	Katy	Old Lucy	Prince	
George	Cressie	Marie	Devina & Child	
Abigail	Peter	Joshua	August	
Quash	Mingo	Old Moll	Old Phebe	
Nancy	Carie	Cynthia		
Prince	Old Philip	Abredean		
Try	Cesar	Moll		

Ceasar Clarissa Henry Pinky	Hager Anthony Jim Maria	Johnson Benoni Audessetta Prince	Luke Middleton Phebe Limus	Fanny Nell Elisa Sarah	James Judy January David	These Negroes belonging to the Estate of Mrs. McRa of South Carolina and are known on the plantation as the Lundy Gang
Peter Julia Eve Maria Moll Mary Little Cudjoe Hunba Old Grace Patterson	Center Lazurus Big Cudjoe Prince William Burton Sally Moses Phillis Jonas	Nancy Judy St.Mary Tira Miller Harriett Jack Katy Apollo	James Robb Esqr holds a title for these Negroes. They are known on the Plantation as the Oswichee People			
Neppy Betty Old Tyra Will Swash Old Terry	Abraham Ben Daniel	These Negroes belong to the Trust Estate of Mr. A.A. Bee & are hired of her by me they are known as the Bee gang on the Plantation				
Lavinia Adam Peter	Quashy Janey Benah	Charles Hannah	These Negroes are mortgaged to Mrs. Ellen Fassow of So. Car. Subject to a conjugal claim of my son D.D. H. Hamilton			

Andrew Billy Dolly-These Negroes belong to Mrs. E. L. Prioleau of So. Car. and hired by me.

Ned Robert Engineer-These Negroes belong to the trust Estate of Mrs. James Hamilton.

Joe Bill Carpenter belongs to Mrs. Kohene of Philadelphia U is loaned to me by her.

Signed March 11th 1852

J. Hamilton [BCDR: F 245/46]

Lundy Gang
April 9, 1859

January	~ 60 years of age	Jimmy	~ 10 years of age
Pinkey his wife	~ 43	Nancy	Infant
Puss or Maria	~24	Reubin	~ 34
Prince	~23	Middleton	~ 32
Linas	~21	Cesar	~ 45
Milly	~18	Clarissa	~ 40
John or Johnston	~51	Henry	~ 18
William	~35	Lucy	~ 6
Hegar	~60	Mary	~ 3
Jim	~36	Elsey	~ 45
Anthony	~32	David	~ 6
Annette	~22	Clarinda	~ 4
Her infant child		Horris	~ 4
Johnston	~21	General	~ 2
Jake or Jacob	~19	Judy	~ 22
Phebe	~36	Aleck	Infant

Brazoria County Deed J 118-119, Brazoria County Courthouse, Angleton, Texas

Appendix C

J. Lynch Hamilton

In a/c with the Estate of Elizabeth Hamilton Deceased

1857			C _r		D _e	
May	30	By amount paid transportation on Negroes	285	12		
June	12	“ “ “ F H. Meriman Legal Services	25	00		
“	30	“ 1/4 proceeds of Hides	20	67		
“	“	“ Comforms on advancing \$310.12	7	75		
“	“	“ One months interest on \$ 300.00				
“	“	To 1/4 expenses of Plantation to date			571	74
“	“	By amount to Balance	224	20		
			571	74	571	74
1857						
July	1st	To amount to balance brot. down			224	20
Decr	1	By “ paid bal Due on Cotton Gin	50	00		
	31	“ 1/4 net proceeds sales of 247 Bbls of Molasses, 48. Bbls & 85 Bbls syrup & c.	752	19		
		To balance of interest			12	95
		“ ¼ expenses of Plantation			630	87
		By amount to balance	65	83		
			\$868	02	\$868	02
1858		To amount to balance brot down			65	83
Janry	7	By “ of check on N. Y. sent you	600	00		
June	30	“ 1/4 net proceeds of 251 Bbls and 31 Bbls of Molasses, 142 Hds of sugar 44 Bales of Cotton 37 Hides sold by Ball , Hutchings & Co and also for cleaning out Oyster Creek	3445	88		
		By balance of interest	30	92		
		“ compesso for advancing	15	00		
		To 1/4 expences of Plantation			1024	45
		“ amount to balance			3001	52

			4091	80	4091	80
1858						
July	1	By amount to balance brt. forward	3001	52		
	"	" " acceptance favor Mills & Nichols	2465	06		
Decr.	16	" " check on N. Y. sent you	475	00		
1859	29	" " acceptance to W. K. Smith due May	1230	00		
January	7					
Mar	3	" " 15 Bbls Molasses	174	00		
May	21	" " Check on N. Y. sent you	1010	00		
June	30	" " 1/4 net proceeds 1 Keg Butter 141 Bl Cotton 783 Bbls Molasses 14 Bbls syrup & 126 Hds Sugar	5820	38		
		" " int. on account to Date	571	45		
		" " Compra on advancing \$5784.00	129	51		
June	30	To 1/4 Expenses of Plantation			1845	88
		" Amount from Ball, Hutchings & Co			4452	88
		" " to balance			8318	16
			14816	92	14816	92
1859						
July	1	By amount to balance brot Down	\$8318	16		
Decr	31	" " interest on account	499	68		
		" " net proceeds 117 Hds Sugar	3084	73		
		" " 10 Bbls Molasses & 2 Bbls Syrup & 119 Bl Cotton				
		To 1/4 expenses on Plantation			910	14
		" Amount to balance			10992	43
1860						
Janry	1	By amount to balance brot. Down	10992	43		
"	"	" " check on N. Y. sent you	500	00		
June	2	" " " " " " " "	457	88		
	"	" " Paid Kealy Champion Note	116	56		
	30	" " 1/4 Net proceeds 35 Bl. C. 708 Bbls Molasses 178 Hds Sugar 15 Hides & C	5475	94		

		Sold by Ball Hutchings & Co				
		“ “ Compes on advancing \$1047.94	26	69		
		“ “ Interest on account	694	63		
June	30	To 1/4 expenses on plantation			1495	05
		“ Amount from Ball Hutchings & Co			5272	03
	4	“ Notes E. Hamilton executed to Ball Hutchings & Co to take up Debt of J. Lynch Hamilton Due to Them with 12 per ct interest From Date			25000	
		“ Int on \$25000 to Date			68	75
		By amt to balance	13568	30		
			\$31835	83	\$31835	83
1860						
July	10	To Amount to balance brot down			13568	30
Oct	4	By “ paid Ballinger & Jack	500	00		
1861 June	30	“ “ 1/4 net proceeds sales of 96 Hhds Sugar 50 Bls Cotton 57 hides & 88 Bbls Molasses	2056	07		
June	30	To 1/4 expenses of Plantation			1531	84
		“ Amount of interest			1468	24
		By amt to Balance	14018	31		
			16568	38	16568	38
1861						
July	1	To amount to balance brot Down			14018	31
		“ “ of Interest			1682	19
		“ “ 1/4 Expenses on Plantation			1626	65
		By 1/4 Net proceeds of sales of 196 Bbls Molasses,, 85 Hhds Sugar 126 Bales of Cotton	3499	46		
		By amount to balance	13827	69		
			17327	15	17327	15
1862						

July	1	To amount to balance brot down			13827	69
		" 1/4 expenses on Plantation			1693	93
		" Balance of interest			1619	32
Nov	5	By amt sent you in Letter	500	00		
1863 June	30	By 1/4 Net proceeds of sales of 37 Hds & 2 Bbls of sugar. 43 Bl Cotton & 376 Bbls Molasses	9971	39		
		To amount of C. S. Notes from Ball Hutchings & Co \$5419.40 Equivalent in specie at 8 for 1			677	42
		" Amt from Ball Hutchings & C			2616	58
		By amount to balance	9963	55		
			\$20434	94	\$20434	94
1863						
July	1	To amount to balance brot Down			9963	55
		" " of interest			1195	62
		" 1/4 expenses of Plantation			1052	28
1864 April		" Amt. recd from Ball Hutchings & Co			2003	00
		By 1/4 Net proceeds sales of 4 Bbls of Sulphur 78 Hds of sugar 91 Bbls Molasses & C Brandy Alcohol & Rum & C Sold by Ball Hutchings & Co And sales made by other persons And reported to them	3817	58		
June	29	" Amt paid Jackson for Still & Mule in C. S. Notes equivalent in specie	125	00		
		By amount to balance	10272	17		
			\$14214	75	\$14214	75
1864						
July	1	To amount to balance bot. over			1027	17
		" " of Interest			1232	66

		“ “ 1/4 expenses of Plantation			555	70
		By 1/4 Net proceeds of Produce Sold by Ball Hutchings & Co.	1202	13		
		“ amount to balance	10858	40		
			\$12060	53	\$12060	53

The above contains a true statement of J. Lynch Hamilton's account with the Estate of Elizabeth Hamilton, Deceased, as the same appears from the accounts and books of Ball Hutchings & Co. Merchants of Galveston Texas, through whom all the produce raised on the "Retriever Plantation" was sold, and money received for the benefit of said Plantation and from whom supplies for said Plantation were received sep to July 1st 1865.

It being agreed between Elizabeth Hamilton and J. Lynch Hamilton in considerations of the said J. Lynch Hamilton furnishing a greater amount of labor on said Plantation, and his own personal services as Manager and Director of the same, and the said Elizabeth Hamilton furnishing the one half of said Plantation an team (Abner Jackson owning the other half) the said J. Lynch Hamilton was to receive for his said services and the services of his Negroes the one fourth part of the net proceeds of the produce of the said Plantation, he paying the one fourth of the expenses for carrying on the same. It being also understood that the business of said plantation was to be transacted through the House of the said Ball Hutchings & Co. but owing to the late Civil War, and the said Ball Hutchings & Co. removing from Galveston, he the said J. Lynch Hamilton was compelled to do some of the business with other houses as will appear below. First will appear from the books and accounts of A. Sessums Merchant of Houston.

J. Lynch Hamilton

In a/c with the

Estate of Elizabeth Hamilton Deceased

			C _r		D _r	
1865						
Aug.	14	By 1/4 Net proceeds of sales of produce From Retriever Plantation & Rum & Brandy	2189	57 1/4		
		To 1/4 expenses of Plantation			753	88

						1/4
		" amt. recd. from P. Sessums & Co.			3271	39
1865 Dec	13	By 1/4 Net proceeds sales of produce & And money rec'd by Sessums for Produce & Rum & Brandy & c	1781	21		
		To 1/4 expenses of Plantation			218	42 3/4
		By amt wrongfully charge J. L. Hamilton In Sessums account	279	75		
1866 Jany	18	By 1/4 net proceeds sales of 9 Bl C	192	38 3/4		
		To 1/4 expenses of Plantation			860	37 3/4
Feby	19	" " " " "			224	85 1/2
May	9	" " " " "			71	37 1/4
		By amount to balance	1556	28		
			\$5400	34 1/2	\$5400	34 1/2
1865		To amount to balance brot down			1556	28
Aug	10	By 1/4 net proceeds 4 Khds Sugar sold by J.W. House	134	70 1/4		
		To amount rec'd from J. W. House			538	81
		" " " " Jean Prena, over and above the indebtedness of the Retrieve Plantation to him for sugar, molasses & hire of Still House			857	52
		By 1/4 of above net proceeds from Jean Prens	214	38		

		" amount to balance	2602	61		
			\$2952	61	\$2952	61
1866		To amount to balance brot forward			2602	52 3/4
Jan'y	12	By 1/4 net proceeds of 30 Bbls of Molasses Sold Joseph DArcey	165	00		
		To amount rec'd from Jso DArcey			660	00
1865 Aug	10	By amount wrongfully charged from J. W. House	538	31		
		By amount to balance	2459	21		
			\$3262	52	\$3262	52
		Recapitulation				
1865 July	1	Amount Recd Mrs. E. Kamilton As appears from Ball Hutchings & Co. account with 12 per cent int from this date			10858	40
1866 Jan	12	Amount due Mrs E. Kamilton as will appear above from the other accounts with 10 pr cent int from date			2459	21

J. Lynch Kamilton personally appeared before me and being duly sworn deposes & says that the foregoing account is a just and true statement to the best of his knowledge, & belief of the accounts between himself & Elizabeth Kamilton decd. Up to January 12 1866.

The Estate of Elizabeth Kamilton Deceased
In a/c with J. Lynch Kamilton Executor

1866			Specie		Currency	
Jan	19	Paid K. Sharp	328	25		
Feb'y	23	" " "	162	50		
May	15	" for Onabringo	169	45		

"	15	" Freight on Onabringa	11	03		
June	28	" Ambler & Co.	10	67		
July	6	" Freight on corn	28	00		
Aug	10	" Levy & Bro	18	60		
Sept	14	" W. Mc Master	13	50		
"	22	" F. Brown	62	00		
Oct	3	" Follett	55	00		
	4	" For Salt	12	30		
	8	" E. B. Wood	116	13		
	9	" Freight to "Bay City""	3	05		
	13	" "Kate Ryon"	148	50		
	16	Paid Freight to "Bay City"	3	58		
	29	" W. McMaster	34	00		
	30	" "Bay City"	2	25		
			Specie		Currency	
Nov	9	Paid M. L. Weems	150	00		
	20	" Interest to Ball Hutchings & Co	123	10		
		Premium on \$1457.91 Gold @145	653	35	2105	26
Feby	14	Paid for trace chains			22	03
Mar	9	" W. MacMaster			134	15
	12	" Opperman			14	30
	15	" Invoice of Chains			21	00
May	15	" " " Goods			103	00
	16	" P. P. McRae			53	00
June	20	" Invoice Corn			160	40
	30	" S. K. Morris			12	38
July	19	" Invoice on Leather & c.			190	87
July	27	" Charges on 29 B/C to N. York			413	65
Aug		" S. J. Whitman			13	00
	15	" W MacMasters			145	00
	"	" for Onabringa & c			65	55
Sept	22	" Invoice of Plank & Corn			41	77
Oct	4	" " Cement			48	48

	9	" Invoice of Oil, Iron, & c.			160	98
	24	" " " Furnace bars			56	15
Nov	15	" J. C. Jackson expense on Laborers			150	75
Aug	27	" Levy			275	10
Nov	24	" Invoice of flour & coffee			34	49
	"	" " " Shingles			316	26
					4704	47
1866		"Cr" Currency				
May	30	By Proceeds 30 Hhds Sugar	2662	32		
	"	" " 14 Bbls Molasses	429	50		
July	24	" " 26 " "	358	68		
Aug	23	" " 29 Bales Cotton	4477	61		
Sept	26	" " 24 Hhds Sugar	3118	96		
Nov	20	" Interest from Ball Hutchings	149	19	13817	69
		Balance			\$9113	22
Nov	24	Balance due reduced to Gold @ 145			\$6147	04
1866		Continued	Specie		Specie	
Jan	21	Received for Brandy			37	52
	"	" " Sales 16 lbs Sugar			2	00
	28	" from Craibe & Brown			5	50
Feby		" " Sales of Brandy			29	00
Mar	3	" " 2 bushels Meal			3	00
	29	" " Brown			1	00
Apr	14	" " Sales 60 lbs Sugar			7	50
	26	" " " of Butter			3	50
					\$6236	06
May		Recd for Sales 48 lbs Sugar			6	00
		" " " Butter			11	50
June	1	" from Dr. Martin			29	25
		" for Corn				50
	15	" " 1 bus Meal			1	50
	18	" " 24 lbs Sugar			3	00
	"	" " Butter			14	90

July	"	"	"	Butter			9	10
	"	"	"	Meal			3	50
	"	"	"	Sugar			14	50
	27	"	"	Hire of Wagon One Day			5	00
Aug		"	"	Sales of Butter			11	90
		"	"	"	"		12	00
		"	"	"	"		2	75
Sept		"	"	"	"			75
		"	"	"	"		2	50
		"	"	"	"		1	00
Oct	22	"	"	Lumber			7	50
Nov	24	"	"	Corn			1	50
Dec	31	"	"	Produce sold to Roura			790	55
July		"	"	1 Khā Sugar			117	00
							7271	74
1866				"Dr"	Specie			
July	1 st	Paid for 272 lbs Salt			9	52		
	18	" " 14 lbs Sole Leather & c			10	10		
	26	" Mr. Cushman			20	00		
					39	52		
1866					Dr		Cr	
		Amts bit forward			141	02	72171	74
Feby	16	Paid for files, Gaucett & Lines			262	35		
Mar	14	" J. L. Hamilton's expenses to Galveston & back			22	00		
		" Soloer & Bed Screw			3	75		
		" 1 Belt & 1 lb Powder			1	30		
April	17	" Lead			2	25		
May	5	" 20 lbs Nails			2	50		
	11	" J. K. K. expenses to Galveston & back			22	00		

		" 1 Auger	1	00		
		" Freedmen 1 st Quarter	920	76		
		" Christopher for Shoes	13	50		
		" Shoe Pags, Tacks & Leather	8	00		
	15	" Mr. Brown	50	00		
	19	" " "	29	00		
June	1	" Expenses on freight at Prewitt's	1	00		
		" 2 Sacks of Salt	5	00		
	5	" 1 Water Bucket		50		
	30	" John Lang	50	00		
		" Cinda Making Clothes	6	00		
		" Venus " "	6	00		
		" J. L. K.'s Expenses to Galveston & back	18	00		
July	1	" Freedmen 2 nd Quarter	1089	73		
	"	" Christopher Shoes	16	00		
		" Expenses on freight at Prewitt's	2	50		
	22	" J. K. K.'s expenses to Houston & back	7	00		
	25	" for Labor on Sugar	2	00		
Sept	19	" " Collars	14	50		
	22	" " Baskets & Ox bows	7	'75		
			\$2709	31	\$7271	74
Sept	24	Paid Jim L. Extra	4	00		
Oct		" Freedmen 3 rd Quarter	1193	75		
		" Christopher Shoes	21	00		
	3	" for 1500 Brick	15	00		
		Labor on Sam at Prewitts	5	00		
		Amt carried forward	\$3948	06	\$7271	74
Oct	3	Paid 1 bottle Iodine	2	00		
		" J. K. K. Expenses to Houston	9	75		
	7	" Underwood & Brooks	9	83		
		" Ferriage		25		
		" for Extra Wood	80	25		

		" Boys for Cotton	5	53		
	17	" Wash for fixing Saw Mill	5	00		
	19	" Ferriage & Labor		75		
	24	" Extra hands	1	25		
Nov	1	" " "	29	75		
	6	" Canole Moulds		75		
	8	" Bob for Brick Layers Work	17	20		
	12	" Potato Seed	5	00		
	13	" Daniel Britton	9	75		
	14	" Ward Hands	8	75		
	21	" Mooser	1	00		
	25	" Ben Oria	1	00		
		" Boy's hats	2	00		
	30	" 1 Round file		75		
Dec	2	" Corking Coolers	4	00		
	27	" John Griffin Henderson, Harry Lake & Nat Carpenter's Work	42	00		
	31	" John for Grind Corn	1	50		
		" Paid Freedmen 4 th Quarter	2603	58		
		" Christopher "	17	50		
			\$6797	10	\$7272	74
		By error in charge for files			262	35
		" Proceeds of corn Sold to Lipscomb			102	00
		" Produce Sold DArcy			660	00
		" Draft favor M. L. Weems charged in error			150	00
			\$6797	10	\$8446	09
		To Amount Paid Clerks fee v. 1	12	70		
		" " " " " v. 2	7	25		
		" " " Judge	89	21		
		" " " "	5	00		
		Compes @ 5 pct on amt \$2922.63 Recd	146	13		
		" " " " \$2624.55 Pd. out	131	20		
			391	49		

		Amt Brot Forward	\$391	49		
		By 1/4 of the Difference between \$4797.10 Paid out and \$8446.09 Recd on Retrieve Account One fourth being the interest of the Estate			412	24
		Balance Due Estate	20	75		
			\$412	24	\$412	24
		Balance Due Estate brot down			\$20	75

J. Lynch Hamilton personally appeared before me & being duly sworn deposes & says that the foregoing account showing a balance of \$20.75 in favor of the Estate is just & correct. That most of the produce was sold by Ball Hutchings & Co & expenses paid by them. The Estate of E. Hamilton has to pay one fourth of the expenses of the Retrieve Plantation & receives one fourth of the nett Proceeds of the Crops. The amount paid out to Freedmen are kept in a book for that purpose & the receipts of the Freedmen are taken in said Book. The other amounts sold on the Plantation & expenses then are also kept in a Plantation Book, and as there has to be settlements with the Estates of Margaret and Abner Jackson Decd & your Petitioner who owns the other part the voucher can not be filed with this account he prays that said account may be approved. That 12 months further time be granted him to settle said Estate to carry on said Plantation & sell crops at Private Sale for such other orders as may be necessary in the premises.

Sworn to & subscribed before J. Lynch Hamilton

This 28th day of

February 1867

[Elizabeth Hamilton Probate Case 829, Brazoria County Courthouse, Angleton, Texas]

Appendix D

Negroes on the Retrieve Plantation purchased by Abner Jackson on the 9th April 1859 and since that time:

Prince	aged	about	28 years	1500.00
Linas	“	“	25 “	1500.00
Caesar	“	“	40 “	1000.00
Henry	“	“	20 “	1500.00
Jim	“	“	40 “	1000.00
Anthony	“	“	38 “	1200.00
Johnston	“	“	48 “	1000.00
Middleton	“	“	30 “	1500.00
Benoni	“	“	43 “	1000.00
Jake	“	“	18 “	1500.00
Abraham	“	“	60 “	- 00.00
Daniel	“	“	32 “	1500.00
Ben	“	“	25 “	1500.00
Smart(?)	“	“	20 “	1500.00
Jeff	“	“	24 “	1100.00
Pinkey	“	“	45 “	800.00
Pop	“	“	35 “	900.00
Wiley	“	“	30 “	1000.00
Elsey	“	“	43 “	600.00
Judy Lundy(?)	“	“	24 “	1200.00
Hager	“	“	60 “	100.00
Phebe (Sickly)	“	“	35 “	300.00
Timmy	“	“	75 “	00.00
Eve	“	“	40 “	400.00
Neppy	“	“	40 “	600.00
Jano	“	“	40 “	700.00
Harriet	“	“	45 “	300.00
Judy	“	“	25 “	1250.00
Little Tyre	“	“	16 “	1250.00
John	“	“	7 “	500.00
Davy	“	“	9 “	600.00
Clarinda	“	“	8 “	500.00
General	“	“	5 “	350.00
Lucy	“	“	8 “	600.00

Jenny	“	“	12	“	1000.00
Alex	“	“	4	“	300.00
George	“	“	6	“	400.00
Lucky	“	“	4	“	300.00
William	“	“	7	“	450.00
Washington	“	“	4	“	250.00
Hager	“	“	3	“	200.00
March	“	“	4	“	350.00
Morris	“	“	6	“	400.00
Nancy	“	“	5	“	250.00
Tammy	“	“	2	“	150.00
Francis Ann	“	“	2	“	150.00
Eliza (infant)	“				100.00
Jim	“	“	7	“	500.00
Clarisa	“	“	45	“	600.00
Butler (infant)	“				100.00

5500 Bushels of corn	2750.00
½ of 10 yoke of oxen undivided	200.00
½ of 37 mules	1080.00
½ of 12 carts & wagons	180.00
½ of farming utensils on Retrieve	500.00
½ of 138 bales of Cotton on Retrieve packed	3450.00
½ of bal of Cotton Crop estimated at 40 bales	1000.00
½ of 40 hhds of Sugar	1600.00
½ of bal of Crop estimated at	4400.00
½ of 2 ponies	30.00
½ undivided half of Retrieve Plantation containing about 3400 acres out of the Austin Grant on Oyster Creek	30000.00
Retrieve Stock of Cattle containing about 800 head	4800.00

Appendix E

Administrator's Bond - "Democrat and Planter" Print, Columbia

THE STATE OF TEXAS, }
COUNTY OF BRAZORIA. }

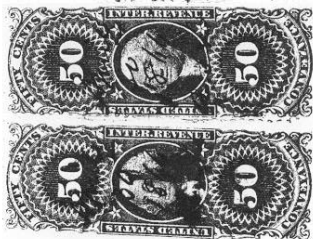
KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, That we J. Lynch Hamilton
as principal and M. S. Munson, Geo. C. Jackson, A. S. Lathrop & R. M. Collins
as sureties, are held and firmly bound unto the Chief Justice of the County of Brazoria, in the
sum of seventy thousand dollars, for the payment of which
well and truly to be made unto the said Chief Justice, we bind ourselves, our heirs, executors
and administrators, jointly and severally, firmly by these presents, signed with our hands and
sealed with our seals—the seals being scrawls; the 30 day of April
A. D. 1866

THE CONDITION OF THIS OBLIGATION IS SUCH; That whereas the above bound
J. Lynch Hamilton has been appointed by the
Hon. A. P. McCombe Chief Justice of said County, Administrator of the Estate of
Elizabeth Hamilton deceased
Now, if the said J. Lynch Hamilton shall well and truly per-
form all the duties required of him under said appointment, then this obligation shall be null
and void, otherwise to remain in full force and effect.

J. Lynch Hamilton
Geo. C. Jackson
A. S. Lathrop
R. M. Collins



I DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR, That the writing which has been offered
in proof is the last will of Elizabeth Hamilton
deceased, and without leaving any lawful will so far as I know or believe and that I will
well and truly perform all the duties of Executor of the estate of said Elizabeth
Hamilton with the will annexed according to law.



J. Lynch Hamilton

I was to and subscribed
before me this 30th April 1866
A. P. McCombe
Chief Justice Brazoria

Appendix F

GRANTORS	GRANTEES	Kind of Instrument	Record		Date of Instrument			Description of Property	
			Book	Page	Month	Day	Year	Acres	Survey
Abner Jackson	John Mady	Agree	B	319/20	Oct	12	1843		John Mady to build running gear for a gin and an outside cotton compress upon his plantation \$275
Est. Of John Ferguson of South Carolina	Abner Jackson & James Hamilton	Deed	B	374			1838		125 Slaves listed \$59325
Emily Perry & Eliza Hill	Abner Jackson	Mortgage	B	403/07	April	10	1844	2892	Survey of Retrieve \$11745.29
Abner Jackson	Henry R. Hill of New Orleans	Covenant	B	481	Feb	10	1845	2892 & 1200	1/2 Plantation & 1200 acres bought from Sarah Ann Wharton & Stock & Crops & Profits from Canal
Henry R. Hill	Thomas Lynch Hamilton for Trust of Elizabeth Hamilton & children	Trust	B	479/81	Feb	20	1845		1/2 interest conveyed to Trust for Elizabeth Hamilton & children
Abner Jackson	John Synder	Mortgage	D	14/15	June	15	1844	1200 & 383	Jared Groce 3 1/2 League 383 acres from NW corner \$3190.80
Sarah A. Wharton	Abner Jackson	Deed	D	16/17	June	15	1844	1200 & 383	In order to pay her debt to Synder & Williams
Abner Jackson	Henry H. Williams	Mortgage	D	18/19	June	15	1844	1200 & 383	Jackson also to pay Henry H. Williams \$2343.79
Abner Jackson	John Murle	Mortgage	D	24/26	Dec	4	1845	405	Jared Groce 3 1/2 League 405 acres West side \$1822.50
Abner Jackson	John Murle	Mortgage	D	30/32	Dec	4	1845	405	Same
James & Emily Perry William G. & Eliza Hill	Abner Jackson	Agree	D	36/37	Nov	13	1845		225 Shares Stock of the San Luis City to build a canal from Brazos R. Bastrop Bayou San Luis Bay
Abner Jackson	Est. of John Ferguson	Mortgage	D	270/73	May	1	1846		103 slaves on property 54 list in mortgage to secure 1/2 \$45000
James Hamilton of South Carolina	Trust of Elizabeth Hamilton and Children	Agree	D	347/48	Feb	19	1844		Received \$7500 from trust to go to Texas and secure 1/2 lands bought by Abner Jackson & slaves
Trust of Elizabeth Hamilton & children	Est. of John Ferguson	Mortgage	D	625	April	15	1848	2892 & 383	\$34200 Retrieve
Abner & Margaret Jackson	Henry R. W. Hill	Deed	D	634/35	April	1	1848	2892 & 383	\$35000 Retrieve
Abner Jackson		Judgement	E	52/56	June	1	1848		Settlement of debts on Retrieve

Henry R. Hill	Thomas Lynch Hamilton for Trust of Elizabeth Hamilton & children		E	48/51	April	15	1848		Circumstances for Jackson selling Retrieve
Henry R. Hill & T. Lynch Hamilton	Edmund Molyneux English Consul Sav. Ga.	Mortgage	E	170/175	March	1	1849		Mortgage Retrieve Lists Land & Livestock \$59100
James Hamilton of South Carolina	Eliza Kohne	Trust	E	181	April	25	1849		Slave Joe Bell carpenter
Est. Of John Ferguson of South Carolina	Abner Jackson		E	260	July	10	1849		Mortgage of 104 slaves satisfied
T. Lynch Hamilton	Elizabeth Lynch Prioleau	Mortgage	E	319	March	15	1849		Mortgage \$53200 Retrieve
Sheriff Auction/Henry Williams Suit	Samuel May Williams	Deed	E	403/04	July	4	1848	1200 & 383	Retrieve \$1500
Samuel May Williams	Robert & David Mills	Deed	E	405	Feb	2	1849	1200 & 383	Retrieve \$1500
Robert & David Mills	Abner Jackson	Deed	E	407/08	June	5	1849	1200 & 383	Paid off Judgement
Trust of Elizabeth Hamilton & children	South Western Railroad Bank of South Carolina	Mortgage	G	22/24	April	1	1853		3 Slaves used as security by Trust for Elizabeth Hamilton
James Hamilton of South Carolina	Henry A. Middleton	Mortgage	G	25/26	Jan	1	1837		Owed \$26400 arrears \$13000 used 22 Slaves to secure note not filed in Texas until July 19, 1854
Sheriff Auction/Burrell McBride Suit	Henry D. Lesene Attorney of McBride	Deed	G	182/83	Feb	6	1855		Sale of Retrieve Sheriff's Auction \$35900 with credit for previous debt of \$31712
T. Lynch Hamilton Sav Ga	James Hamilton	PA	G	200	Jan	13	1855		Power of Att. For Retrieve
Henry D. Lesene	Abner Jackson	Mortgage		751/52	Oct	13	1856		\$46042.88 purchase Retrieve mortgaged thru 1862
James Hamilton of South Carolina	Henry D. Crugar of New York Att for Elizabeth Hamiton		H	121/23	Mar	20	1843		Separation of properties belonging to wife and husband to relieve her from her husband's creditors.
Henry D. Lesene	Abner Jackson	Mortgage	H	132/33	Oct	13	1856		same as G751/52
Abner Jackson	Elizabeth Hamilton	Mortgage	H	135	Oct	20	1856		1/2 Retrieve \$23359.60 Note on Mortgage by John C. Jackson Paid July 13, 1863
James Hamilton of South Carolina	Elizabeth Hamilton		H	319/21	Apr	10	1819		Separation of properties belonging to wife and husband to relieve her from her husband's creditors.

James Hamilton of South Carolina	Elizabeth Hamilton		H	323/28	Mar	15	1843		Separation of properties belonging to wife and husband to relieve her from her husband's creditors.
Abner Jackson	Hamilton P. Bee		J	89/91	Mar	14	1859		slaves which had been on property for many years
Abner Jackson & Elizabeth Hamilton	A. C. Spain	Mortgage	J	118/19	Apr	9	1859		Retrieve & Lundy Gang of Slaves for \$21990.99
Elizabeth Hamilton	T. Lynch Hamilton	PA	L	125	Dec	8	1856		
Abner Jackson	Ball, Hutchings & Co.	Mortgage	J	478/83	May	19	1860		\$34000 1/2 Interest 4250 Acres and ~50 Slaves on Retrieve
Abner Jackson	Elizabeth Hamilton	Deed	J	463/64	May	20	1860		1/2 Interest in 850 acres adjacent to Retrieve
Elizabeth Hamilton	Ball, Hutchings & Co.	Mortgage	J	490/92	May	1	1860		1/2 Interest in Retrieve \$34000 same as Jackson
Sheriff Auction	George Ball, John H. Hutchings & John Sealy	Deed	L	291/97	Sept	8	1868		\$16375 1/4 Interest of Abner Jackson 383 acre & 1892 acres tracts and all crops. Another Sale also for Livestock and equipment listed
Sheriff Auction	George Ball, John H. Hutchings & John Sealy	Deed	L	297/??	Sept	11	1868		\$16375 1/4 Interest of Margaret Jackson 383 acre & 1892 acres tracts and all crops. Another Sale also for Livestock and equipment listed
Sheriff Auction	George Ball, John H. Hutchings & John Sealy	Deed	L	315/21	Sept	21	1868		\$16375 1/2 Interest of Est of Elizabeth Hamilton 383 acre & 2892 acres tracts and all crops. Another Sale also for Livestock and equipment listed
Sheriff Auction	George Ball, John H. Hutchings & John Sealy	Deed	N	62/63	May	1	1870		West 1/2 or 1700 acres of tract bought by Wiley and later Jackson \$2125
Sheriff Auction	John S. Baxter	Deed	O	420/21	Oct	17	1874		East 1/2 or 1700 acres of tract bought by Wiley and later Jackson \$2550
S. E. Perry Est.	John Sealy	Deed	S	27	May	24	1879		2165 acres \$3247.58
Nellie B. & J. C. League	Sarah C. Ball	Deed	63	420/24	Mar	4	1904		Signed over interest for \$5000
Frank M. Ball Est.	Sarah C. Ball	Deed	65	264	Mar	5	1904		Signed over interest for \$5000
Sarah C. Ball Est	Nellie B. League & Daisy Davis	Deed	65	171	Dec	21	1904		2/3 League & 1/3 Davis
J. H. Hutchings Est.	Minnie Knox Hutchings	Deed	80	282	June	12	1908		One third
Hutchings et al	E. B. Mills	Deed	137	1	Dec	21	1916		One third

John Sealy et al	E. B. Mills	Deed	137	3	Dec	21	1916		One third
Nellie B. League et al	E. B. Mills	Deed	137	5	Dec	21	1916		One third
E. B. Mills	T. Martin	Deed	137	6	Feb	6	1917		Signed over for \$10.00
T. Martin & his Wife Aleen of Fort Bend County	Prison Commission of Texas		145	242/44	Feb	1	1918		\$320,879.60 for 7448.27 acres

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Andrew	1865	854
John C. Jackson	December 8, 1867	867

George W. Jackson	1871	923
Elizabeth Hamilton	December, 1862	829

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