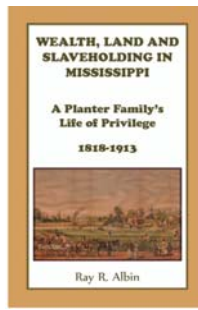


**WEALTH LAND AND SLAVEHOLDING  
IN MISSISSIPPI  
A PLANTER FAMILY'S LIFE OF PRIVILEGE  
1818-1913**

**By  
Ray R. Albin**



**NOTES:**

**GENESIS OF THE BOOK**

Masters Thesis Research in 1977 led to published article in 1988 regarding 1852 fugitive slave case in Gold Rush California

December 2010 – July 2013 further research/writing – Who was this family?  
Expanded article into book published in August 2013

**Chapter Contents**

- **CHAPTER I** Virginia and Tennessee
- **CHAPTER II** Wilkinson County, Mississippi
- **CHAPTER III** Madison County
- **CHAPTER IV** Bolivar County
- **CHAPTER V** The Mound Plantation in 1850
- **CHAPTER VI** Charles Perkins in the Goldfields
- **CHAPTER VII** The Fugitives
- **CHAPTER VIII** Antebellum Bolivar County
- **CHAPTER IX** Civil War
- **CHAPTER X** Aftermath
- **CHAPTER XI** Texas, and the End of the Mound Plantation
- 

**The PERKINS Family**

- First arrival- Nicholas Perkins- came as indentured servant in 1641 to Virginia
- Gained freedom as part of work agreement-becomes planter
- Subsequent Perkins generations gained wealth founded on land expansion and Virginia's *tobacco-based* economy
- All used indentured servant labor until ....
- 4<sup>th</sup> generation - Constantine Perkins - employs first use in the Perkins family of slave labor on his plantation - approximately 1712

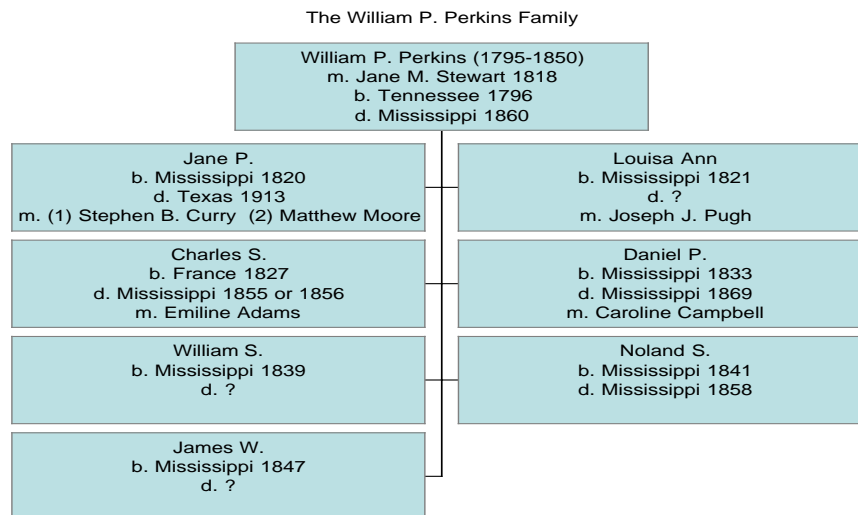
- Some Virginia planters – Perkins included - become rich .... melding tobacco production with free slave labor
- Birth of the Virginia colonial planter aristocracy - generations of Perkins descendants reap the benefits

### William P. Perkins - patriarch

- Virginia born 1795 - direct descendant of the indentured servant Nicholas Perkins
- Grows up in Tennessee in slaveholding family, absorbs slaveholder mentality
- Discharged from army and graduates from College of Nashville 1817 or 1818
- Becomes planter in Wilkinson County, Mississippi

### In Mississippi 1818-1850

- Established plantation east of Woodville in Wilkinson County - cane and cotton
- Married Jane Stewart of prominent family, formerly of Tennessee
- Soon owns more than 1,000 acres and 79 slaves (in 1824)



- Wilkinson County 1818-1832
- Madison County 1832-1842
- By 1838 - 100 slaves/3,200 acres
- Seizes opportunity in undeveloped Bolivar County on Mississippi River

### In Bolivar County -

- William Perkins Purchases eventually 3,200 acres in Bolivar County beginning in 1841
- Slaves develop entire plantation
- Emerges as county's largest land owner/ slaveholder by 1850
- Enormous profits
- 166 slaves! Only 1% of all U.S. slave-holders owned as many
- Never understood moral indefensibility of slavery

### Charles Stewart Perkins in the gold fields

- Graduates Princeton 1848
- June 1849, age 23, departs Mississippi for CA gold fields with slave, Carter Perkins
- Successful claim in El Dorado County
- August 1850 joined by 2 neighbors, the Kirks, and Perkins' family slaves Robert Perkins and Sandy Jones
- November 1850 Charles has all 3 slaves working his claim in Yuba County
- Perkins' cousin - CA Governor Peter Hardeman Burnett

### **Homeward Bound April 1851**

- William Perkins dies in November 1850
- Charles returns to MS to manage the family's Mound Plantation in April 1851
- Leaves 3 slaves with a Dr. Hill – to be released after 6 months labor
- November 1851- 3 slaves freed
- By May 1852 living in Ophir (near Auburn) highly successful

### **The Fugitives**

- April 1852 California passes own unique Fugitive Slave Law re slaves brought into CA prior to admission in Sept. 1850.
- Key feature- accused no rights to testimony and automatically deemed fugitives
- Charles Perkins in MS in April 1852 moves to return slave trio to Mound Plantation
- Cousins sent to bring them back
- May 31, 1852 3 slaves arrested in Ophir brought to Sacramento

### **In San Francisco**

- 2 judges in separate hearings order their return to MS under terms of CA's FSL
- Brought to SF for return to MS
- Rearrested in SF on appeal to CA Supreme Court
- CA Supreme Court upholds CA FSL law and orders slaves return to MS
- Language anticipates U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in Dred Scott case years later
- Slaves may have escaped in Panama???

### **The Bigger Picture**

- Perkins case galvanizes CA black community
- SF and Sacramento black community emerged as vital players in freedom efforts for the 3 slaves
- Funded lawyers, petitioned CA Supreme Court
- Black activism in CA found its roots in Perkins case
- Future such cases garner support from black and white community
- Irony for Charles Perkins –
- Slaves' lawyer helps found CA Republican Party - opposed to slavery

### **Book Availability**

- Village House of Books, Los Gatos
- Online at Amazon.com
- Barnes and Noble.com
- AncestorStuff.com
- Heritage Books (<http://www.heritagebooks.com>)
- Keplers Books - order only

- ❑ From author tonight, signed copy, with 20% of sale proceeds going to the Santa Clara County Historical and Genealogical Society

**The author researched portions of the book at the Santa Clara County Library – Homestead Facility – during the time period December 2010 - April 2013.**

As 1 reviewer wrote this book proves that “history and genealogy are deeply intertwined.”

Special thanks to the Santa Clara County Historical and Genealogical Society for offering the opportunity to speak and to the Homestead Library for providing the facility.

Thanks also to Mary Boyle for facilitating the multitude of tasks in conjunction with the presentation - among which were the computer graphic display set-up and notes distribution - and to Lisa Harmer for the distribution of the flyer.