
Primary Source Comprehension: Farm Census

Primary SOLs: 6.10, 7.9, 8.4

Document Context: Built in 1747, Rippon Lodge was the private home of the Blackburn Family until 1811. Richard Blackburn was originally from England. He came to the American colonies to start a new life. He owned vast amounts of land for agriculture, and built his home on the bluff off Neabsco Creek. From here he could send items out to market or other people by boat or by land, using the King's Highway (a road which close to by Rippon Lodge). Richard Blackburn grew wheat, corn, and tobacco. He owned cows, horse, and a saw mill. His son, Thomas, became the owner of the home in 1757. In addition to running the plantation, Thomas was involved in politics. During the Revolutionary War, Thomas volunteered for the militia, and was injured at the battle of Germantown, which ended his military career. The home was sold to the Atkinson family in the early 19th century.

Document Text: Just like with people, every ten years in the 18th century there was a census that counted farming activities. It recorded crops produced for sale, livestock, farm equipment, and other agricultural activities. This information gives us today an idea about what farmers were growing and when, as well as how much money they made. Farming is not just physically demanding, it is also an intellectual challenge to use the right techniques and attempt to make it profitable. The Atkinson family who owned Rippon Lodge in 1850 was very wealthy, and enslaved African-Americans did the farm labor for them while they kept the profits.

Exercise: Using the 1850 agricultural census data attached, answer the following questions:

1. Using the census tables create three graphs; one showing cash values (columns 4, 5, 13, 27, 29, 45, and 46), one showing animals (columns 6-12), and one showing crops produced in bushels (14-17, 22-26, 33, 34, and 39). Label all parts clearly.
2. How much was Rippon Lodge worth in 1850 according to the Census?
3. What was worth the most? What was worth the least?
4. What crop was produced the most?



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NA Form 14131d (6/03)

1850 Agricultural Census Schedule

Schedule 4 - Productions of Agriculture in Prince William in the county of Prince William State of Virginia in the year ending in June 1, 1850
 Enumerated by me on the 4th day of August 1850 William L. Carter Ass't Marshal

Name of Owner, Agent, or Manager of the Farm	Acres of Land		Cash Value of Farm	Value of Farming Implements and Machinery	Live Stock June 1, 1850										Produce during the year ending June 1, 1850				
	Improved No.	Unimproved No.			Horses No.	Asses and Mules No.	Milch Cows No.	Working Oxen No.	Other Cattle No.	Sheep No.	Swine No.	Value of Live Stock Dollars	Wheat Bush.	Rye Bush.	Indian Corn Bush.	Oats Bush.	Rice Lbs.	Tobacco Lbs.	
1 <u>Richard Atkinson</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>800</u>	<u>16,000</u>	<u>350</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>6,100</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>1,200</u>	<u>500</u>			
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