

Christopher Gadsden's Inventory

When a person died in the colonial period, it was common for an inventory or list to be made of his possessions and their value. Historians can learn much from a close examination of a person's belongings. In the left column are listed the items inventoried with their separate values, and the right column gives the total value of the items. Values are given in U.S. currency. The difficulty in using this source is to know what to take notes on. Read through the source and use the guide that follows to help in note-taking.

[Beginning of p. 366]

A true & perfect Inventory of the Goods, **Chattels** & Personal Property of **Genl. Christopher Gadsden decd.** & made by us 26. Oct. 1805.

Furniture & Sofa \$20 – 1 Doz : Mahogany Chairs with horse Hair Bottoms \$24 – 6 Mahogany Chairs Canvass bottoms \$12 – 6 Windsor Chairs \$2 40/100 [\$2.40]	58 40 “
1 Green Arm Chair \$1 – 1 Easy Chair \$6	7 “ “
3 Leaf Mahogany Tables \$5 – 1 large & 2 Side Tables \$40 – 1 Tea Table \$3 – 1 Work Table \$2	50 “ “
1 Slab \$6 – 3 Cabinets \$10 – 1 Bedstead \$6	22 “ “
1 Press of Painted Wood \$4 – 1 Doz ; Silver table Spoons \$12 – 3 Old Silver ditto [spoons] \$3 – 1 Silver Ladle \$7	26 “ “
Crockery \$12 – 20 Silver Tea Spoons \$18 – 1 Clock \$8	38 “ “
2 Feather Beds & 2 Pillows \$15 – 2 Matrasses & 2 Bolsters \$7 – 2 Drays @ \$30 - \$60 – 3 Horses & 3 Carts \$300 – A New Chaise \$200 – 1 old ditto [Chaise] \$10_ -	592
Books – Latin Greek & Hebrew Books 188 Vol.s \$3 English Books includg Magazines & Pamphlets 166 Pampts Vols: 222 @ \$3	564 666 “ “
188 Bls : Rice @ \$18 per Ble \$3384 Negroes in Charleston – Charles \$400 – Monday Carpenter \$350	4134 “ “

[Beginning of p. 367]

George \$500 – Joe \$400 – Roger \$350 – Dublin 450	1700 “ “
Little Joe \$300 – Bob \$250 – Mark \$50 – William \$250 – Boys Wenches & Children – Nanny \$300 – Nancy & her child	850 “ “
George \$350 – Sukey \$350 – Betty \$200 – Maria \$350	1550 “ “
Charlotte & Joe \$300 – John \$200 – Peg \$100 – Molly \$100	700 “ “
Molly & Silla \$400 – 1 Share in Santee Canal \$400	800 “ “
	\$11,757 40 “

Appraised by us 26 October 1805.

William Hall – Samuel Wragg – James Hasell –

A true & perfect Inventory of the Goods & Chattels & personal Property of General Christopher Gadsden deceased upon his Plantation in the Parish of Prince George Winyaw, in the District of Georgetown, made by us this 15th November 1805.

Negroes – Luke \$350 – Billy \$350 – Sally \$300 ---	1000	“	“
Lillys Family (4 in number) \$900 – George \$450_ -	1350	“	“
Big Jack, his wife Betty & 2 Children \$350_ little Jack & his wife Tirah \$500 – Casar & his wife Sylvia \$200	2050	“	“
July & his wife Diana \$600 – Old Carolina & his wife Sindy \$250 – Old Dolls Family (5 in number) \$1100 – Brutus \$200 – Boatswain \$50 – Scipio & his wife Elsy \$600 – Jimmy (a Carpenter) \$600	3400	“	“
Friday (Deaf & Dumb) nothing \$00 – Seyphax \$200	200	“	“
Hercules \$500 – Cattle – 4 Horses \$120 – 29 head of oxen at 16 Dolls [dollars] each \$464 – 18 head of Stock Cattle at 5 Dolls [dollars] each \$90 – 1 Ox Cart \$30	1204	“	“
1 large Pot \$3 – 7 Ploughs \$21 – 7 Ox Chains \$20 --	44	“	“
4 pair of Mill Stones \$27 – 2 Iron Pokes \$2 – Sundry Carpenters Tools \$10 – 1 Harrow \$3 – 2 Tables \$5	47	“	“
1 Large Glass \$3 – 1 + but Saw \$4 – 2 Whip Saws \$8	15	“	“
Sundry Coopers Tools \$5 – 3 Branding Irons \$6	11	“	“
1 Sun Dial \$3 – 4 Rice Scives \$3 – 1 Frow & 3 Wedges \$4 – 2 Flats \$20 – 2 Wind Fans \$15	45	“	“
1 pr. of Steel yards \$4 – 3 plough Chains \$4	8	“	“
A Grind Stone \$4 – 9 Bushels of Salt \$9	13	“	“
350 Barrels of Rice or thereabouts, some in the Rough & some Stacked \$6000 – 100 bushels of corn or thereabouts \$50	6050	“	“
	\$14,367	“	“
Say \$15,437			
Appraised by us 15 th November 1805.			The actual total is \$15,437
Samuel Wragg – John Screven – Joseph Clark			What \$14,367 refers to is uncertain.

From Inventories D 1800-1810. Charleston County, SC: 366-367. Available at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

Glossary (in order of appearance)

Chattels - slaves

Genl. - General

decd - declared

Doz. – dozen

***Slab** – The rough outer piece of a log that is left when the rest is cut into planks.

***Press** – an apparatus for exerting great pressure, used in extracting the juices from fruits and in making cheese.

Crockery – earthenware; ceramic dishes, bowls, etc. made from clay

***Dray** – a cart or wagon without permanent sides built for heavy loads; loosely, any heavy wagon.

***Chaise** – A light open or closed carriage, originally with two wheels and drawn by one horse, latterly also four-wheeled and with two or four horses.

includg - including

Pampts -pamphlets

Bls – bales **Ble** - bale

Ploughs - plows

Sundry – miscellaneous, various

***Harrow** – An agricultural implement having teeth of wood or metal arranged on a frame and used chiefly for loosening or pulverizing soil.

Coopers – a cooper constructed containers like buckets and barrels

Scives- (scythes?) – a tool composed of a curved blade attached at an angle to a wooden stick and used to cut down grass or rice stalks.

***Frow** – A tool consisting of a long blade provided with a short stout handle used for riving boards, clapboards, etc.

***Wedges** – A tool thicker at one end than at the other, used for splitting objects, raising heavy weights, etc.

***Flats** – flatboats

*The definitions of these terms are quoted from Craigie, Sir William A., and James R. Hulbert, editors. *A Dictionary of American English on Historical Principles*, 4 Vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938-1944. Slab's definition is not an exact quote but still based on this work. All other definitions are either quoted or based upon *Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary*. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1986.

Note-taking Guide

- What does this list reveal about Gadsden's socio-economic status – poor, middle class, wealthy? Cite examples that prove this.
- What can we learn about Gadsden's intellectual interests? Explain and provide support from the inventory.
- What does the inventory reveal about Gadsden's plantation produced? Explain and include specific information from the inventory supporting your deductions.
- What can we learn about Gadsden's ownership of slaves? Be specific and explain. You should have a lot of notes from this section including the total number and value of slaves.