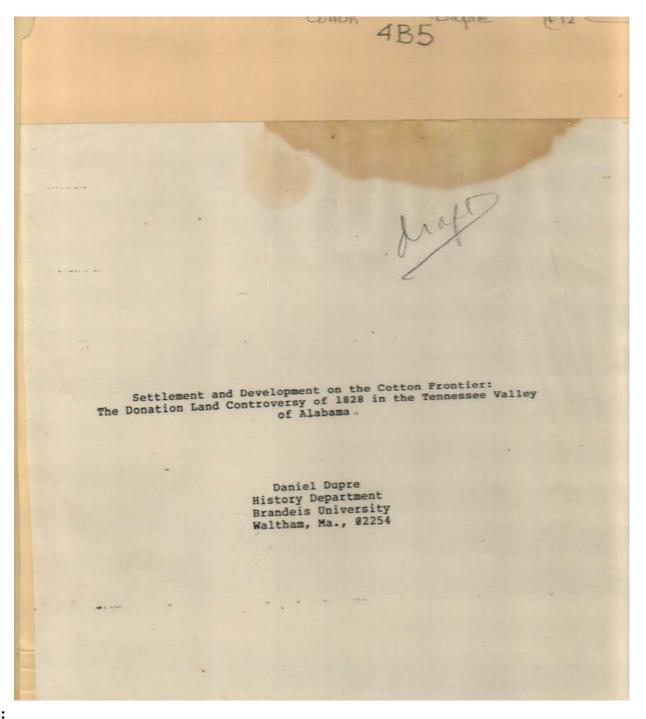
Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries B, Box 5, Folder 12Draft About the Tennessee Valley by Dupree, DanielImage 1r04b05-12-000-0001ContentsIndexAbout



Names:

Brandeis University Dupre, Daniel

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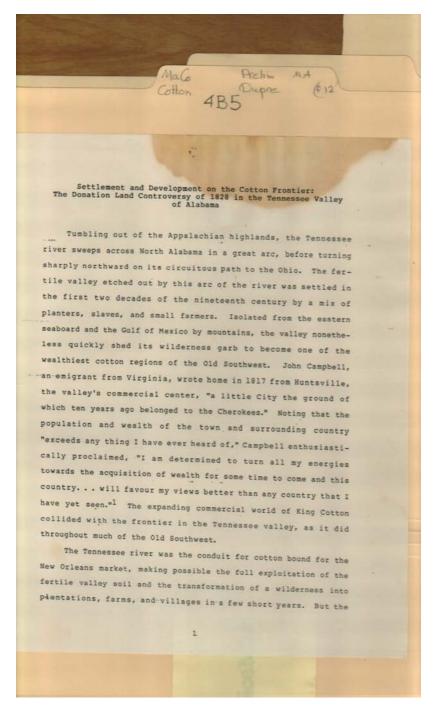
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article

Donation Land Controversy of 1828

Settlement on Cotton Frontier

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries B, Box 5, Folder 12Draft About the Tennessee Valley by Dupree, DanielImage 2r04b05-12-000-0002ContentsIndexAbout



Names:

Campbell, John

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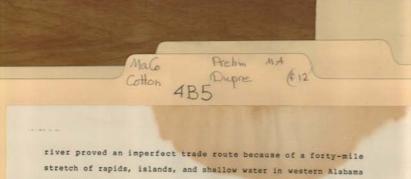
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Donation Land Controversy of 1828

Settlement on Cotton Frontier

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries B, Box 5, Folder 12Draft About the Tennessee Valley by Dupree, DanielImage 3r04b05-12-000-0003ContentsIndexAbout



stretch of rapids, islands, and shallow water in western Alabama called the Muscle Shoals, which prevented steamboat passage and seriously hindered flatboat and keelboat traffic for much of the year.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, valley residents struggled over this problem of disrupted transportation, debating, through the press and at public meetings, the relative merits of turnpikes, canals, and railroads. Plans to connect Huntsville with the Tennessee river ten miles away, and to breach the mountains to the south or east to gain access to Mobile, Charleston, or Savannah, received much attention, but promoters of internal improvements focused most of their efforts on the Muscle Shoals. They pushed, prodded, and cajoled citizens and politicians to get a canal built around the obstacle throughout the 1820s, finally succeeding in the mid-1830s. But the canal, some fifteen miles in length, bypassed only the worst parts of the shoals, and never worked as a steamboat passage. Damaged by a flood several years after its completion, the Muscle Shoals canal fell into disuse and was abandoned.²

Tennessee valley boosters cared passionately about the Muscle Shoals canal. They saw it as the answer to all their fears of regional isolation and economic stagnation. But the canal itself has little historical significance and is trivial in comparison to such great milestones of the transportation revolution as the Erie Canal and the state-sponsored internal improvement programs of Pennsylvania and Ohio.³ It was not a dynamic force in the economic development of North Alabama; few cotton

2

Names:

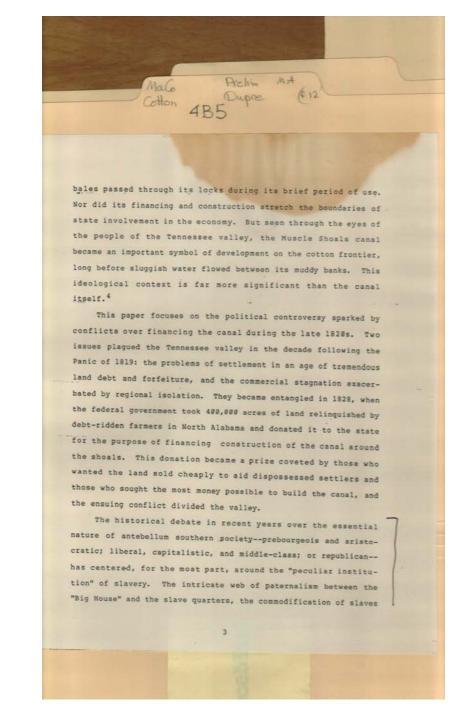
Muscle Shoals Canal

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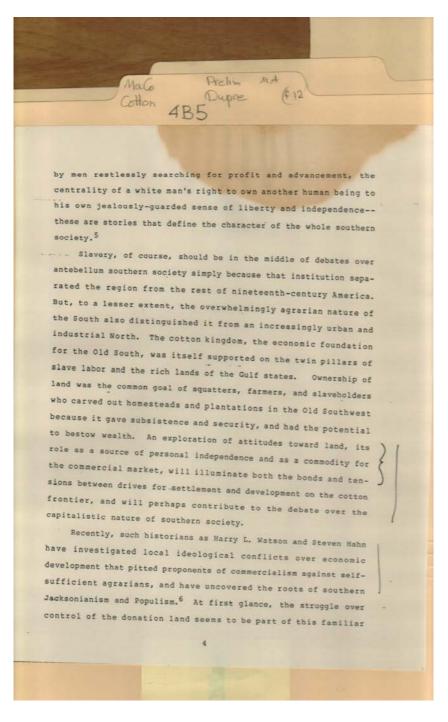
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Dates:

1820

Relinquished Land Donated to State

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries B, Box 5, Folder 12Draft About the Tennessee Valley by Dupree, DanielImage 5r04b05-12-000-0005ContentsIndexAbout



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Agrarian Nature of South

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TN Valley of Alabama

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Hahn, Steven

Jacksonianism and Populism Slavery Watson, Harry L.

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries B, Box 5, Folder 12Draft About the Tennessee Valley by Dupree, DanielImage 6r04b05-12-000-0006ContentsIndexAbout

Prehim NA Malo 1/412 Dupre Cotton 4B5 story; the sparring sides took opposite corners, one advocating the facilitation of commercial trade, the other the equitable settlement of debt-ridden farmers and squatters. And out of this conflict, as in Watson's Fayetteville region, came the first gropings toward the second party system in North Alabama. But the Tennessee valley was part of the cotton frontier, not a selfsufficient upcountry region resisting the encroachments of the commercial marketplace. Settlement and development were enmeshed in the valley; the donation controversy was not characterized by clear divisions between agrarianism and commercialism. Both sides of the debate were rooted in a tradition that measured social progress through man's control over the wilderness and linked ownership rights to the improvement of land. Still, the donation controversy had a polarizing effect on the valley and opens a window on the tensions of a society in transition, struggling to move beyond its frontier origins. The battle over the land was, in essence, a battle between two different visions of community order and progress. The Tennessee valley was settled rapidly and a plantation economy quickly emerged as the cotton kingdom pushed southwestward with the great migration of the early nineteenth century. Madison County, ceded by the Cherokees in 1806, was already dotted with squatters who had been filtering down from Tennessee for several years. Over three hundred households were registered on the eve of the first federal land sale in 1809. Most were 5

Names:

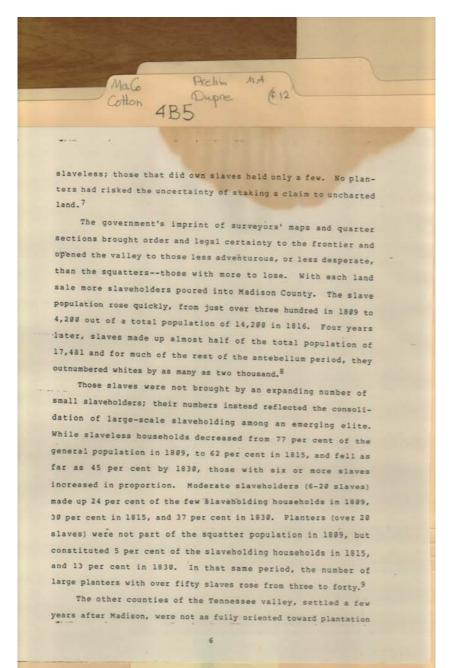
Watson,

Places:

TN Valley of Alabama

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Slave Holders and Planters

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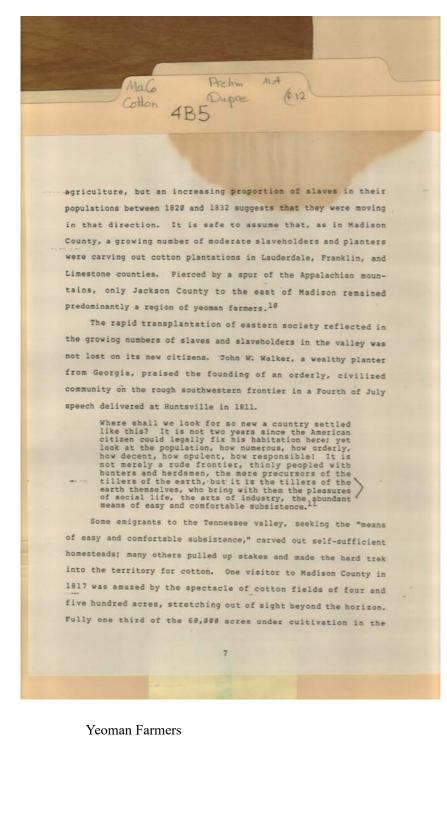
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Surveyor's Maps

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article

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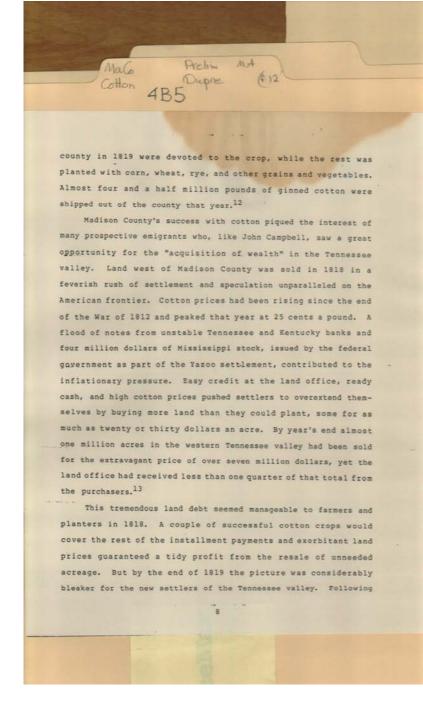
Places:

Walker, John W.

TN Valley of Alabama

1811

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries B, Box 5, Folder 12Draft About the Tennessee Valley by Dupree, DanielImage 9r04b05-12-000-0009ContentsIndexAbout



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Campbell, John

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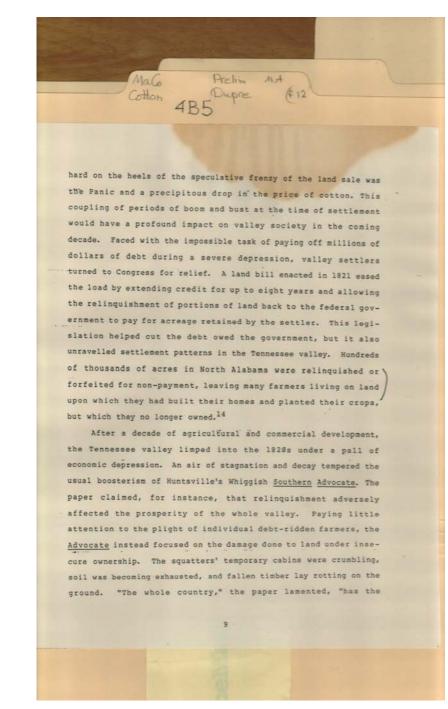
TN Valley of Alabama

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Easy Credit at Land Office Land Debt Tremendous

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Southern Advocate

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Panic Brought Impossible Task

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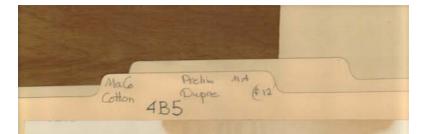
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article

Dates:

1819

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries B, Box 5, Folder 12Draft About the Tennessee Valley by Dupree, DanielImage 11r04b05-12-000-0011ContentsIndexAbout



appearance of rapid decline.*¹⁵ A second <u>Advocate</u> editorial one month later began on a more positive note, proudly proclaiming that no other part of the United States possessed the agricultural resources, "either of soil or climate or variety of productions," of the Tennessee valley." But, the paper continued, there was no region of the country "where trade languishes, to so alarming an extent," where imports cost so much and exports of the staple produce sold so low.¹⁶

Clearly, frontier development had not been the orderly ascension to ever higher levels of civilization boasted by John Walker in his Fourth of July speech and promised by the great migration of 1818. The boom society had crashed headlong into depression. The juxtaposition of squatters and soil exhaustion, of agricultural abundance and anemic trade in the editorials presented to the world a fractured and jarring image of a frontier society that had passed into decay even before it had the chance to achieve its potential.¹⁷

Land settlement and the rejuvenation of trade through internal improvements became the key economic issues of the 1828s for politicians and boosters seeking to reform the Tennessee valley. Settlement advocates petitioned Congress to encourage the sale of relinquished land by fixing prices at low levels and giving preference to those living on the land. This would not only relieve squatters and farmers who had lost substantial portions of their holdings but would also create a stable population and ensure the careful stewardship of the valley's resources.¹⁸ Development proponents, on the other hand, stressed internal improvements and a restoration of commercial prosperity. They

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Names:

Land Settlement Economic Issue

Places:

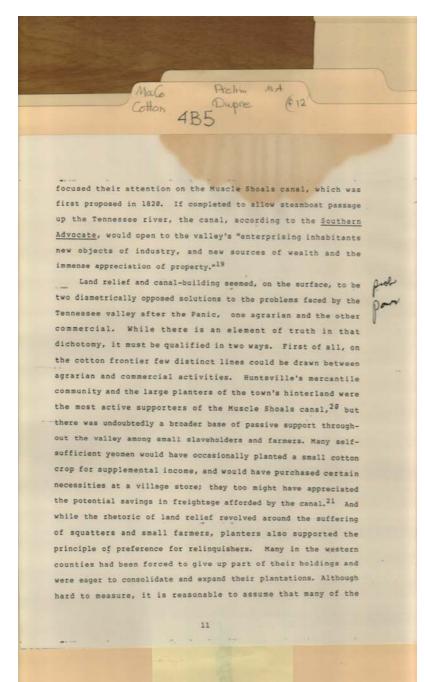
TN Valley of Alabama

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Trade Languished Walker, John Advocate

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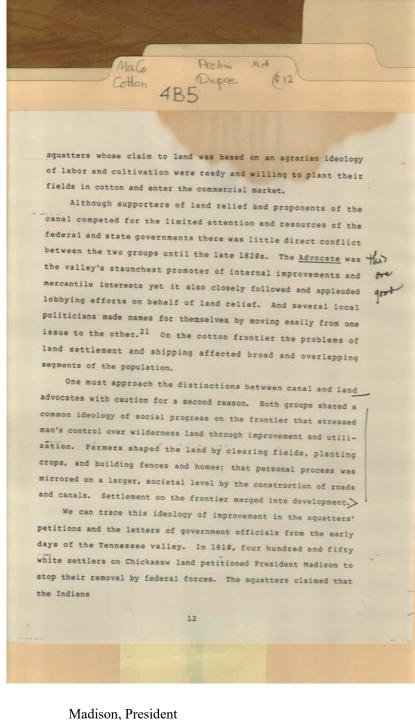
TN Valley of Alabama

Types:

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Southern Advocate

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Advocate Staunchest Promoter

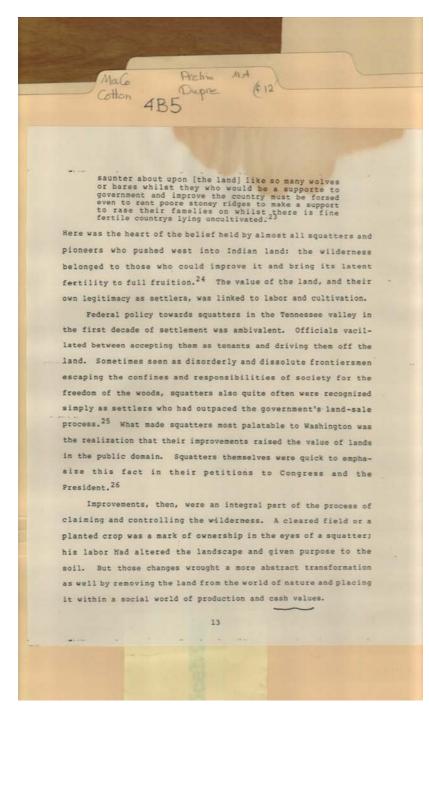
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TN Valley of Alabama

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Madison, Presiden Squatters Petition Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries B, Box 5, Folder 12Draft About the Tennessee Valley by Dupree, DanielImage 14r04b05-12-000-0014ContentsIndexAbout



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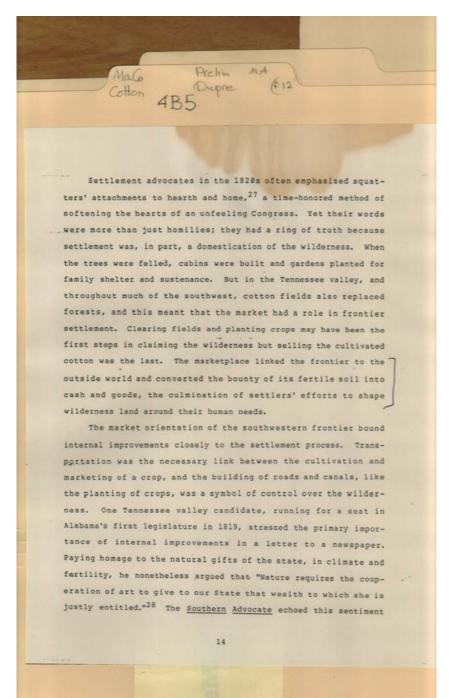
Policy

Ambivalent Federal

Types:

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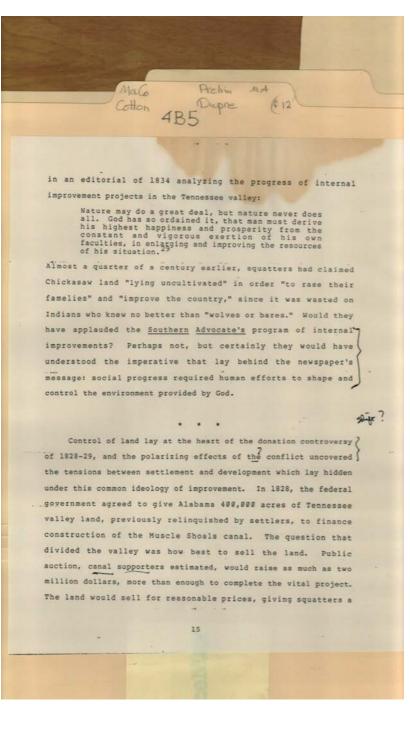
Marketplace Linked to Frontier

Places:

TN Valley of Alabama

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Donated Land Controversy

Places:

TN Valley of Alabama

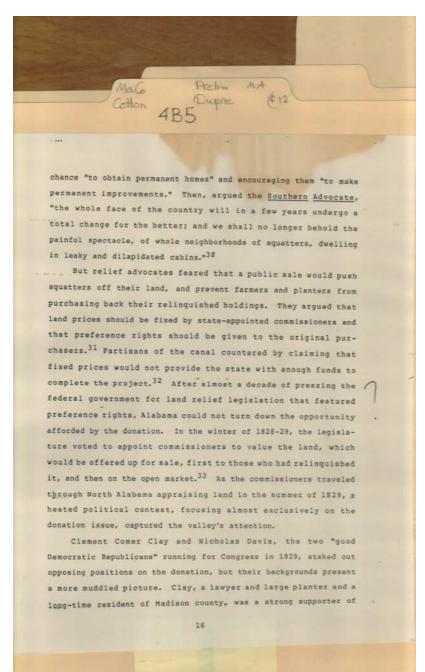
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article

Dates:

1828

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries B, Box 5, Folder 12Draft About the Tennessee Valley by Dupree, DanielImage 17r04b05-12-000-0017ContentsIndexAbout



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Clay, Clement Comer

Places:

TN Valley of Alabama

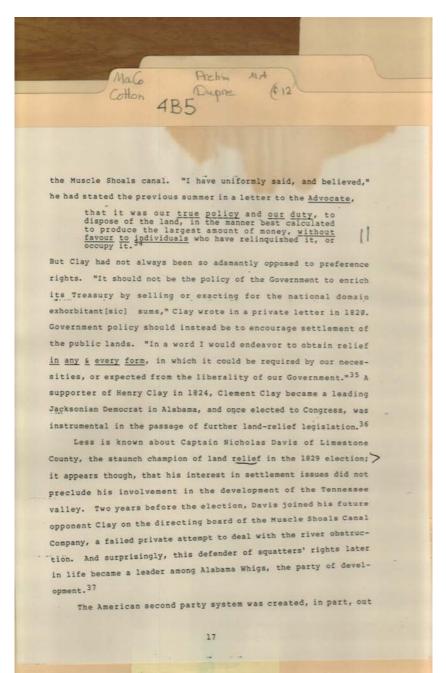
Types:

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Davis, Nicholas

Southern Advocate

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Names:

Clay, Clement Clay, Henry

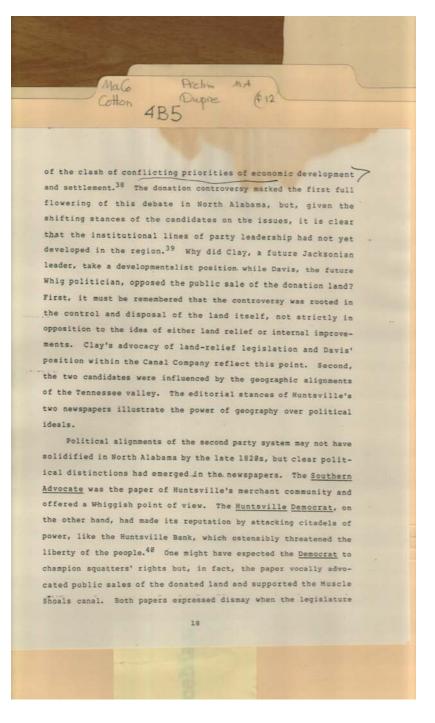
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Davis, Nicholas, Captain Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries B, Box 5, Folder 12Draft About the Tennessee Valley by Dupree, DanielImage 19r04b05-12-000-0019ContentsIndexAbout



Davis,

Huntsville Democrat

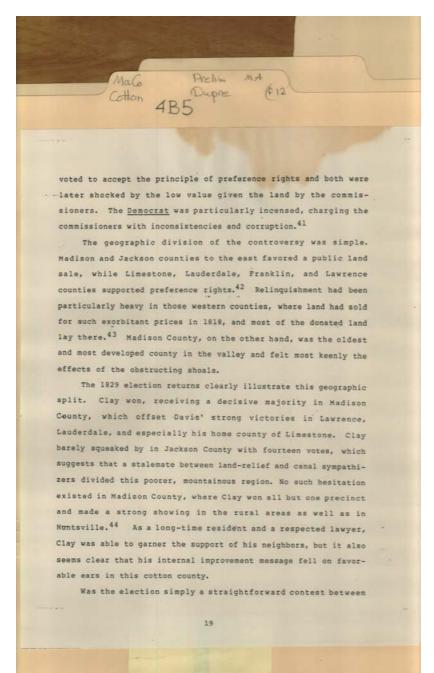
Southern Advocate

Names: Clay,

Places: TN Valley of Alabama

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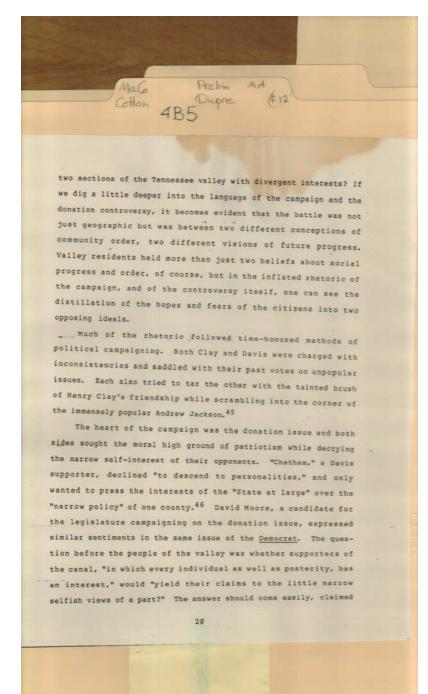
Places: TN Valley of Alabama

Types:

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Davis,

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Places:

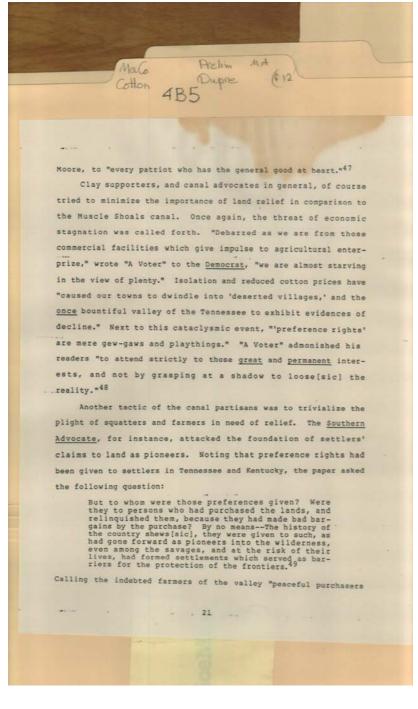
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Clay, Henry Davis, Jackson, Andrew Moore, David

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Moore, David

Peaceful Purchasers

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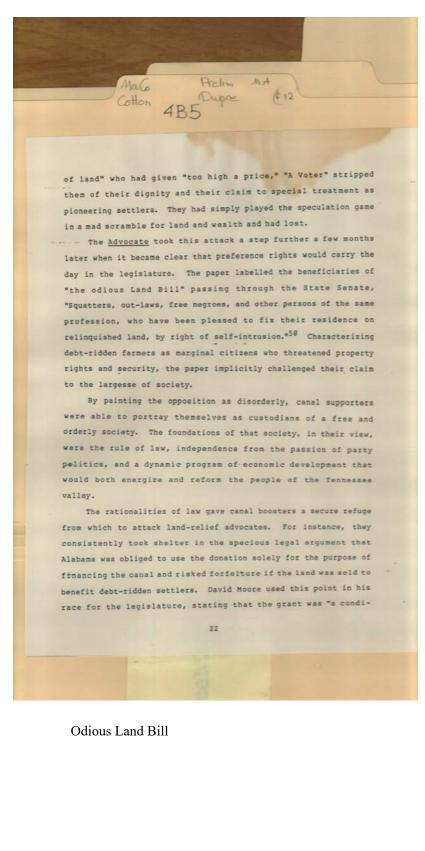
Clay,

Places:

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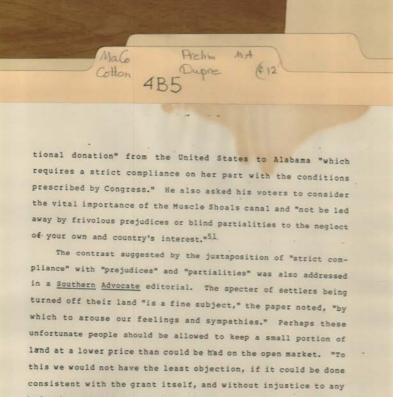
Moore, David

Places: TN Valley of

Alabama

Types:

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body else. But it is an old and true saying, that, we should always be just, before we are generous."52

Rationality, justice, and the law should prevail over emotionalism, sympathy, and partiality, canal supporters argued. To ensure this, society needed an independent electorate and strongly-principled politicians, able to resist "every faint breeze of popularity." The political passions unleashed by the 1829 campaigns for Congress and the legislature threatened that detached independence. A series of letters critical of popular electioneering techniques appeared in the papers alongside those debating the donation issue. The rowdy violence, intemperance, and vote-buying at candidates barbecues were attacked as symbols

23

Names:

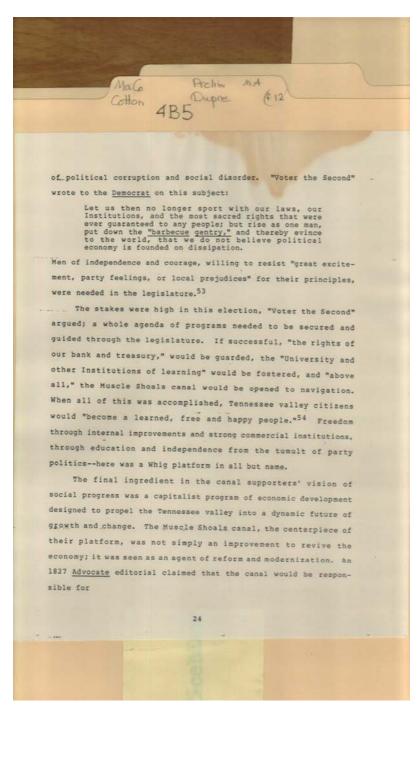
Justice before Generosity

Places:

TN Valley of Alabama

Types:

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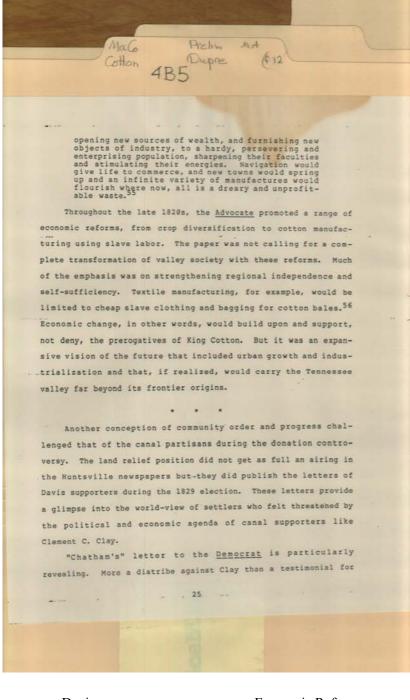
Tennessee Valley Future

Places:

TN Valley of Alabama

Types:

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Names:

Chatham, Clay, Clement C.

Places:

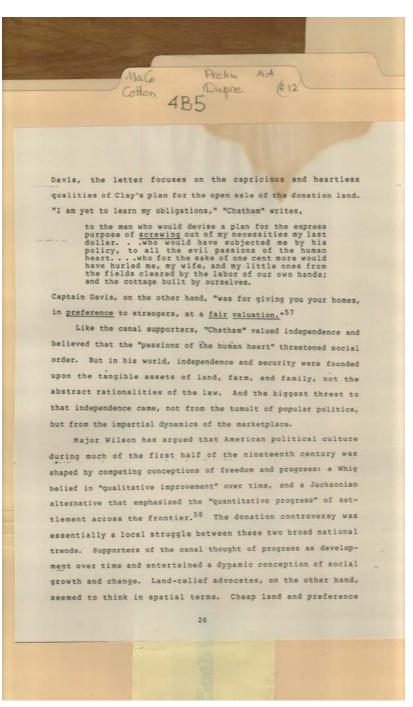
TN Valley of Alabama

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Davis,

Economic Reforms Proposed Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries B, Box 5, Folder 12Draft About the Tennessee Valley by Dupree, DanielImage 27r04b05-12-000-0027ContentsIndexAbout



Names:

Davis, Captain

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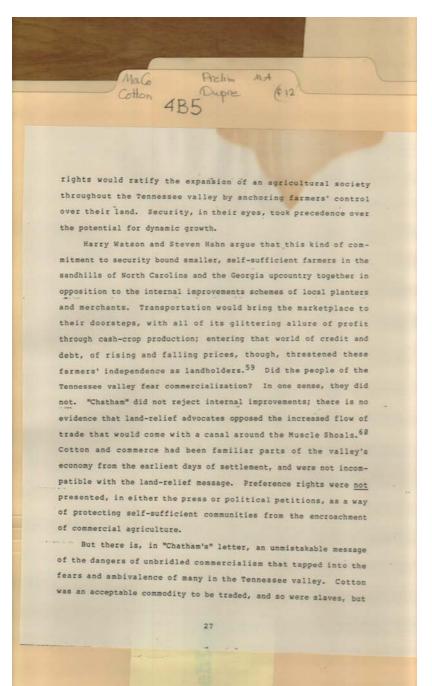
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article

Wilson, Major

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Unbridled Commercialism Dangerous Watson, Harry

Names:

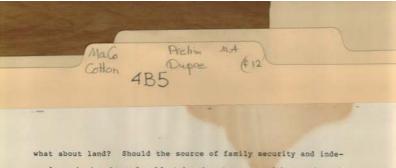
Chatham, Hahn, Steven

Places:

TN Valley of Alabama

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what about land? Should the source of family security and independence be bought and sold, taken by strangers with enough cash to pay? To "Chatham," that would not only be ungenerous, but unjust as well.

Nicholas Davis and land relief were popular in the western counties of the Tennessee valley. Perhaps the social changes associated with the emerging plantation economy heightened a sense of insecurity among smaller farmers and squatters, giving an added resonance to "Chatham's" message of heartless commercialism and the loss of land. Strangers were pouring into the counties throughout the 1828s. Many of these new settlers were undoubtedly planters and slaveholders eager to expand and consolidate their plantations by buying land from neighbors struggling with debt.⁶¹ The donation offered the best opportunity for these marginal farmers to secure their holdings.

Opposition to public sale of the donation land in the western half of the valley was strengthened by memory, as well. Settlers may have directed their anger toward newcomers in 1829, those with "one cent more" who would have "hurled" a family "from the fields cleared by the labor" of their own hands, but they had only to look into their own hearts and remember their own recent history to understand the perils of unbridled commercialism. Most of those who had relinquished land in the 1828s had participated in the speculative frenzy of the sale in 1818 and had paid exorbitant prices for their farms, blinded by soaring cotton prices and easy credit. They entered the commercial world of the marketplace with a vengeance, only to be punished by the Panic of 1819. What better lesson was there of the dangers of commodi-

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Davis, Nicholas

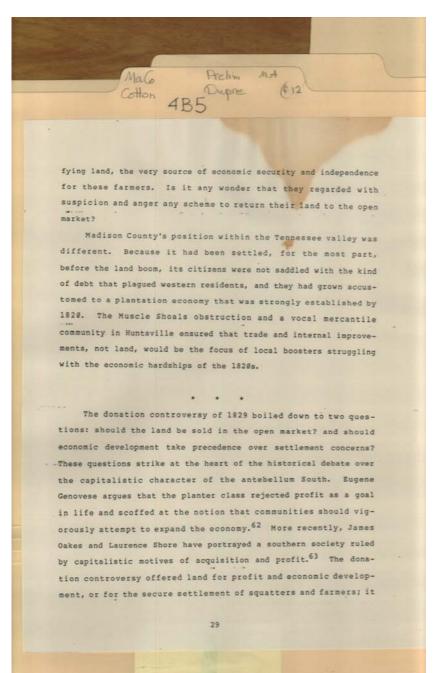
Names:

Chatham,

Places: TN Valley of Alabama

Types:

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Controversy of 1829 Genovese, Eugene

Places:

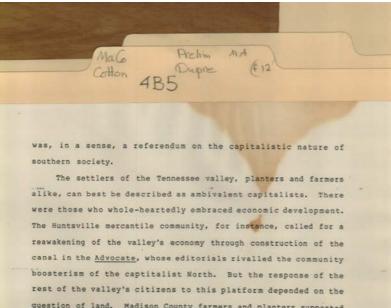
TN Valley of Alabama

Types:

article

Madison County Position Settled Oakes, James Shore, Laurence

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rest of the valley's citizens to this platform depended on the question of land. Madison County farmers and planters supported the canal because they, for the most part, did not have land to lose. Those in the western half of the valley opposed the canal, not because they feared an increased flow of trade, but because they feared losing the land upon which they planted their cotton, and supported their families.

Profit was an important motivation on the cotton frontier; countless settlers migrated west with "the acquisition of wealth" in mind. But beneath that restless drive for advancement was a conservative core that valued the security of landownership. Ironically, the struggle in the 1820s to resolve the persistent problems of frontier life--regional isolation and land settlement--revealed the inherent contradiction of the commercial frontier. Land was a source of both security and potential wealth, but the pursuit of profit through speculation or cottonplanting pushed land into the commercial sphere and threatened the independence of the farmer. Tennesses valley settlers had been willing to risk in the heady days of 1818, to push thoughts

30

Names:

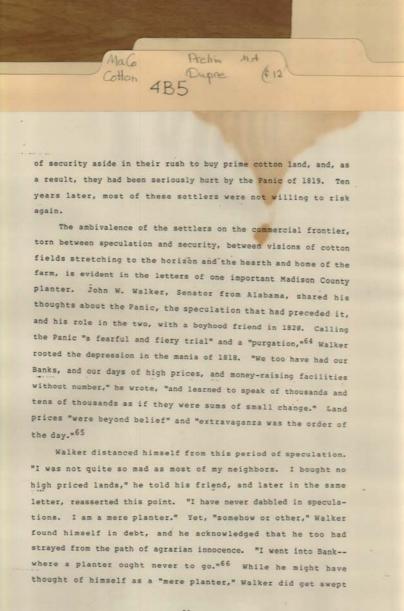
Ambivalent Captalists

Places:

TN Valley of Alabama

Types:

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Walker, John W.

Names:

Panic of 1819 A Purgation

Places:

TN Valley of Alabama

Types:

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Achim 114 Malo Cotton Dupre A12 4BE

along in the speculative hysteria of 1818; his entry "into Bank" was not the ingenuous stumblings of a simple farmer into the commercial world. Walker was a stockholder in the leading speculative organization of the Tennessee valley, the Cypress Land Company. In the summer of 1818, he bought from the company six lots in Florence for \$1,788.⁶⁷ Walker had no intention of moving west and was clearly hoping that the prime location of the new town at the foot of the Muscle Shoals would ensure a tidy profit from the resale of his lots.

Walker did not reveal this speculative side of himself to his old friend; his self-identity, rather, was focused on his plantation and family. "I have a very pretty tract of land and some twenty laboring slaves--independent of a rather unwieldy household establishment." His family was growing and he also found himself responsible for his sister and her family, "which is numerous & wholly destitute." Despite these burdens, "I have been enabled to live confortably, keeping a pretty good table and continuing to make my income cover my expenditures." But because of his debts and missteps as he ventured forth into the world of speculation, his plantation was threatened, and with it the independence and comfort of his family. His anguish is evident when he told his old friend, "should God vouchsafe to deliver me from this peril, I shall take especial care hereafter how I expose my little barque to so tempestuous a sea."⁶⁸

- Walker died several years later, his plantation intact, but thousands of Tennessee valley farmers, ensnared in webs of debt, struggled on, anxious about losing their land. Did they share Walker's clear ambivalence toward profit and security? Marvin

32

Walker,

Names:

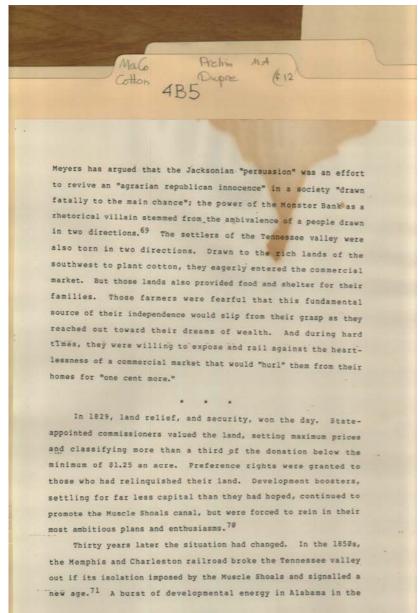
Cypress Land company

Places:

TN Valley of Alabama

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Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries B, Box 5, Folder 12Draft About the Tennessee Valley by Dupree, DanielImage 34r04b05-12-000-0034ContentsIndexAbout



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Names:

Memphis-Charleston Railroad

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TN Valley of Alabama

Types:

article

Meyers, Marvin

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Malo Prelim MA Jupre Cotton decade before the war altered the economic landscape of the state. Such historians as J. Mills Thornton and William Barney have suggested that these changes created a kind of "social vertigo" among many in Alabama. The independence and freedom of white farmers, already circumscribed by the politics of sectionalism, which prevented further expansion onto new frontiers, seemed threatened by these forces of modernization. The secession crisis, they argue, was played out in this emotionallycharged atmosphere.⁷² The Old South, then, entered the Confederacy, the symbol of its triumph and harbinger of its death, haunted by the ghosts of conflicts attendant at its birth, when the commercial world of King Cotton met the frontier.

Names:

Barney, William

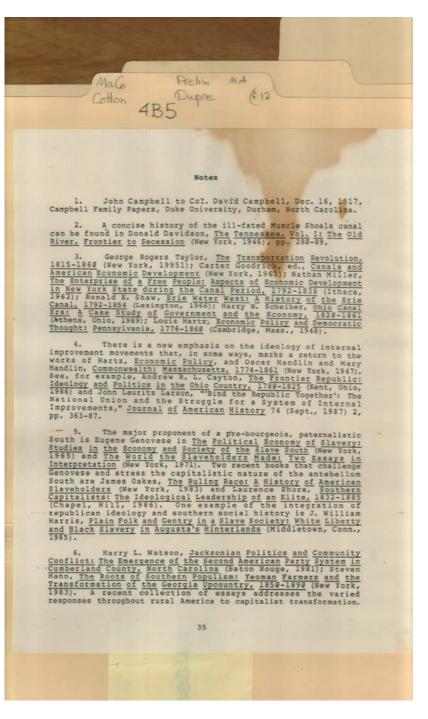
Social Vertigo

Thornton, J. Mills

Places: TN Valley of Alabama

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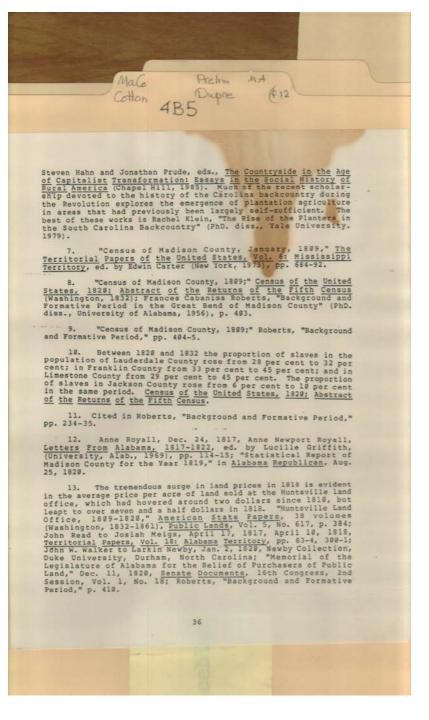
Names:

Campbell, David, Colonel Campbell, John Cayton, Andrew R. L. Davidson, Donald

Types:

sources

Genovese, Eugene Goodrich, Carter Hahn, Steven Handlin, Mary Handlin, Oscar Harris, J. William Hartz, Louis Larson, John Lauritz Oakes, James Scheiber, Harry N. Shaw, Ronald E. Shore, Laurence Taylor, George Rogers Watson, Harry L. Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries B, Box 5, Folder 12Draft About the Tennessee Valley by Dupree, DanielImage 37r04b05-12-000-0037ContentsIndexAbout



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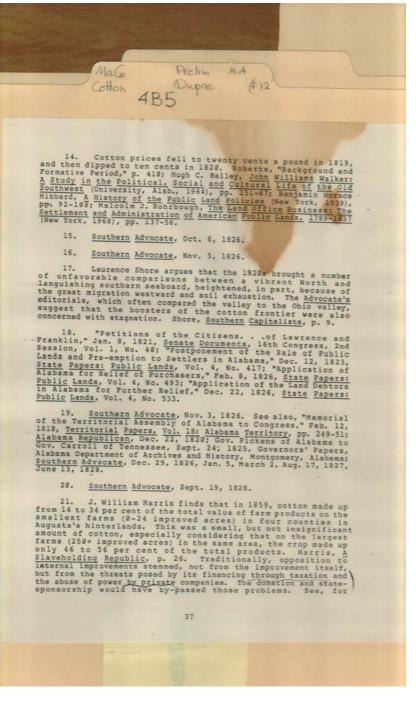
Carter, Edwin Griffith, Lucille Hahn, Steven Klein, Rachel

Types:

sources

Meigs, Josiah Newby, Larkin Prude, Jonathan Read, John Roberts, Frances Cabaniss Royall, Anne Newport Walker, John W.

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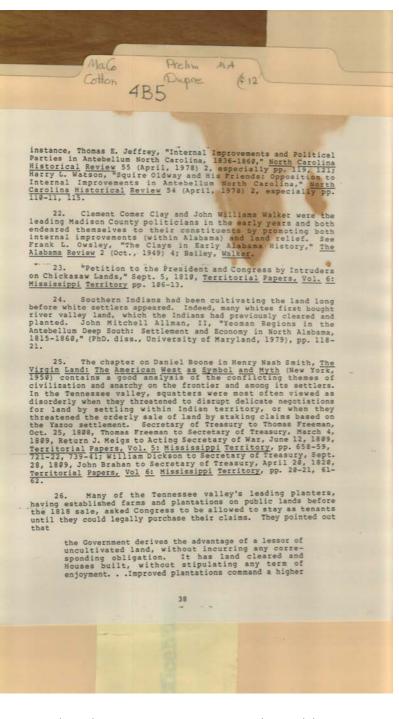
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Carroll, Governor Hailey, Hugh C. Harris, J. William

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Hibbard, Benjamin Horace Pickens, Governor Roberts, Frances Cabaniss Rohrbough, Malcolm J. Shore, Laurence Walker, John Williams Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection:Series 4, Subseries B, Box 5, Folder 12Draft About the Tennessee Valley by Dupree, DanielImage 39r04b05-12-000-0039ContentsIndexAbout



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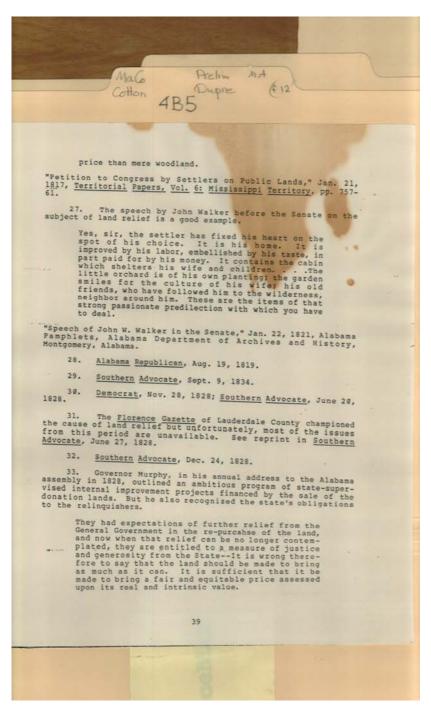
Allman, John Mitchell Boone, Daniel Brahan, John

Types:

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Clay, Clement Comer Dickson, William Freeman, Thomas Jeffrey, Thomas E. Meigs, Josiah Owsley, Frank L. Smith, Henry Nash Walker, John Williams Watson, Harry L. Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries B, Box 5, Folder 12Draft About the Tennessee Valley by Dupree, DanielImage 40r04b05-12-000-0040ContentsIndexAbout

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Murphy, Governor

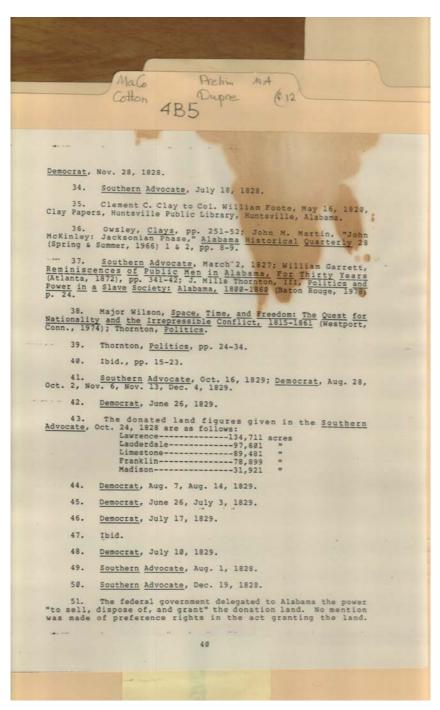
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Southern Advocate

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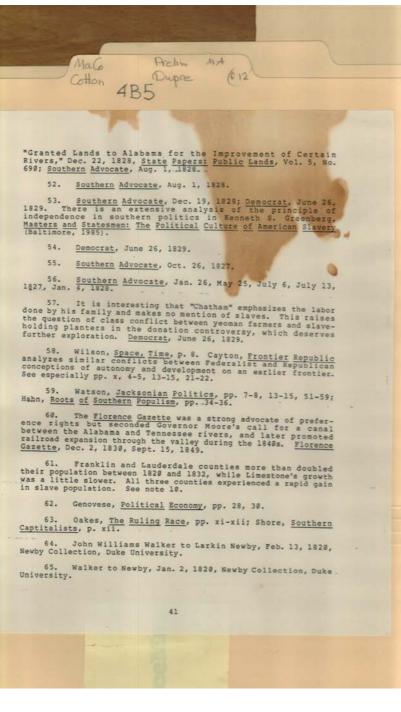
Clay, Clement C. Foote, William, Colonel

Types:

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Garrett, William Martin, John M. Owsley, Thornton, J. Mills Wilson, Major Democrat Southern Advocate

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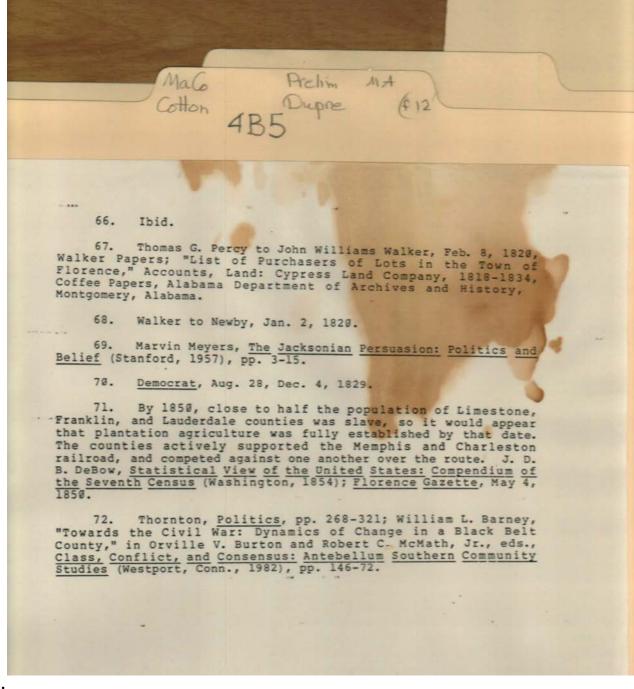
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Cayton, Genovese, Hahn,

Types:

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Moore, Governor Newby, Oakes, Walker, Watson, Wilson, Democrat Florence Gazette Southern Advocate Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries B, Box 5, Folder 12Draft About the Tennessee Valley by Dupree, DanielImage 43r04b05-12-000-0043ContentsIndexAbout



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