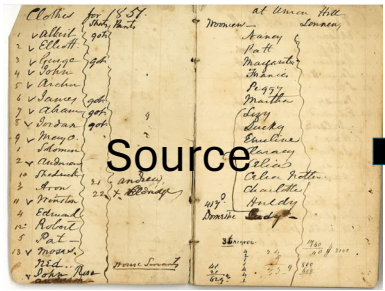# Enslaved Data Preparation

Methodology from Transcription to the final csv file for submission to the Journal of Slavery and Data Preservation

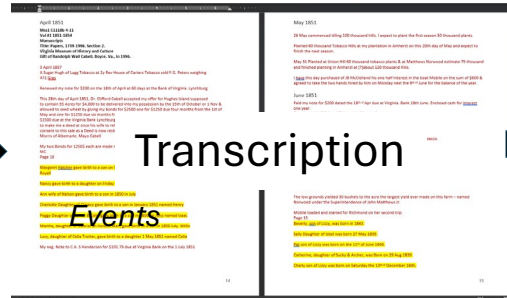Kathy Cabell Terlesky, Ph.D.

January 2024

Extracting information on the enslaved persons from Cabell family documents
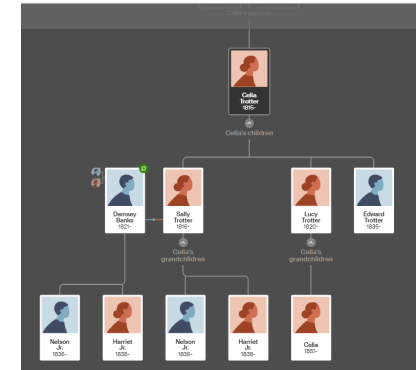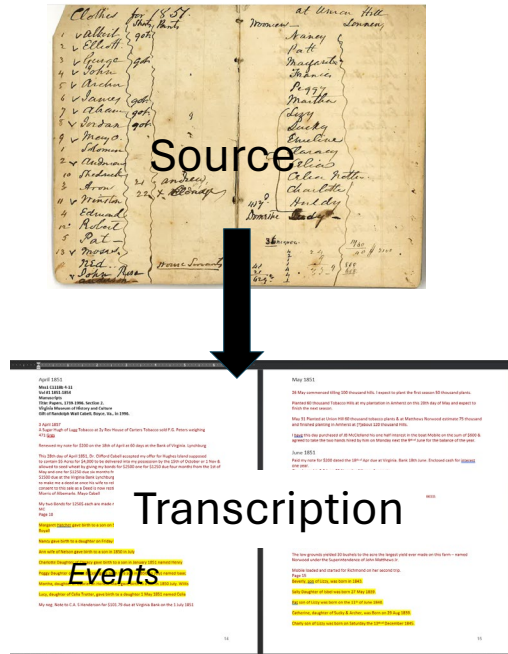

Source

Transcription

Events

Enslaved person data
- Names, dates, activities
- Relationships
- Overseers
- Enslavers

Journals, Wills, Deeds, Letters

Individual and family data publicly available

Transcribing methodology

Source

Transcription

Events

1. Visit Repository
   1. Wills, Deeds, Probate Court records – Nelson County Court house in Lovingston, Va., or Amherst County Court House in Amherst Va. Or on-line through Ancestry.com.
   2. Personal journals
      1. University of Virginia Special Collections Library
      2. William & Mary SWEM Special Collections Library
      3. Library of Virginia
      4. Virginia Museum of History & Culture
2. Used camera phone to take photos of artifacts and their call number information.
3. Downloaded and compiled photos into one PDF document by source.
4. Transcribe document on computer using word processor.
   1. Capture source document call number and repository information in document.
   2. Capture page numbers or dates on page of each journal.
   3. Use [?] when a word or letter cannot be deciphered.
   4. Capture abbreviations used by the writers and their full definition.
   5. Highlight events with enslaved persons as transcribing.

Assumptions Part 1

Birth year estimation assumptions
1. Birth year was estimated based on events to minimize errors in documenting duplicate or unique individuals
2. Age provided by enslaver with date
3. Woman at least 14 years old at birth of child
4. Woman at max 40 years old at birth of child
5. At least 13 years old to run away
6. "old" is over 60 years
7. Highest monetary value of slaves at 25 years old.
8. Person with less than half the monetary value of the oldest in a list and not listed as a child was estimated to be over 45 years old
9. At least 15 years old to be assigned to an indentured crafts
10. At least 10 years old to be documented in list of receiving necessity
11. Person designated as "child" was less than 10 years old
12. At least 13 years old to travel
13. At least 13 years old to be assigned to an overseer

Sex determination assumptions
1. Sex or gender reference provided by enslaver
2. Sex consistent with biblical name reference
3. Sex consistent with English name reference

Assumptions Part 2

Owner Transfer assumptions
1. Male enslaver inheriting plantation from father, enslaved persons remained at plantation
2. Wife enslaver inheriting enslaved from husband, remained at plantation with wife
3. Daughter enslaver inheriting enslaved from father, enslaved remained at plantation with daughter until marriage and evidence of transfer to new location
4. Son enslaver inheriting enslaved from father, enslaved transferred with son to residence
5. Enslaved transfer sibling to sibling varied depending on proximity of plantations and sibling relationships. These were not always documented

Enslaved Name assumptions
1. Enslaver documented surname
2. Enslaver documented first name. Phonetic spelling variations between enslaver assumed to be the same person (Example, "Brackenridge" and "Breckinridge". And "Clarissa" and "Clericy"
3. Enslaved marriages documented with enslaved given and surnames in Freedman Marriage Records 1866-1867
4. Surnames extracted from persons tracked to 1870 census

Enslaved location assumptions
1. Enslaved person listed as enslaved by a Union Hill enslaver assigned to specific Union Hill plantation. Some persons referenced at locations away from the James River (Amherst), but were included under the Union Hill plantation and enslaver
2. Enslaved born after 1775 were designated as born in Nelson County, Virginia
3. Union Hill location designations use current county names (Nelson) vs historic (Amherst)
4. If an enslaved birth was recorded by enslaver for a location, the same location was used for siblings unless otherwise recorded.

Enslaver assumptions
1. The EVE-ENS event designation is used to state the enslaver and enslaved after the first event referencing the relationship No specific source is provided for this event type as it is extrapolated based on other events for the person.
2. Spouses of the enslavers were included in the Enslaver Data set where known

Tool Selection for Managing Data on Enslaved Persons for journal submission

- Needed a genealogy tool that allows capture, maintenance, and visualization of family data.
  - Requirements:
    - Allow addition of additional sources for genealogy data elements
    - Allow adding new types of genealogy events
    - Provide data quality checks (identify and merge duplicates, data clean)
    - Sync with a genealogy on-line site such as Ancestry.com
    - Allow tailored extraction of data elements into a spreadsheet for analytics using python
    - Allow selection of subsets of people for data extraction
- RootsMagic determined to be the best product for this purpose.
  - www.rootsmagic.com

Extracting and Consolidating Data on Enslaved Persons

Method for moving events and names of enslaved persons from original source material such as journals, wills, deeds and newspaper clippings to a CSV file ready for publication in *The Journal of Slavery and Data Preservation* (JDSP)

Source

Transcription

Events

'Events' spreadsheet

Columns- Event ID, Place, Enslaver, Date, Source, Page, Description, Final 'Final' field is all data combined with semi colon separator. Added to RootsMagic Event on 'Description' field.

EVE-ALT-002;Norwood;857;1857-12-03;36;;"Negro Lucy and Negro Ann had a quarrel":

RootsMagic Desktop Genealogy Software

1. Add Person and data from event
2. Estimate birth date
3. Update with new events
4. Add enslaver and spouse data
5. Add overseer data
6. Add relationships
7. Update birth date estimate

Export CSV data tables

1. Person Data by Unique ID
2. Event Data by Unique ID

Jupyter Notebooks

Align events to person. Perform data quality checks. Add sources. Add enslaver ID overseer ID associations. Add JDSP unique ID prefix. Perform descriptive analytics. Prepare final csv file.

csv

JDSP-ready format

Compiling the Events Spreadsheet

Excel formula to concatenate across the row using a semicolon separator between column values

Events Spreadsheet

1. Create spreadsheet tab of 'Event Types, definitions and abbreviations consistent with the Enslaved controlled vocabulary recommendations. Expand as necessary during transcriptions.

Source

Transcription
Events

Event Types Master

1. Add events to 'Events' spreadsheet using successive event IDs as the Event ID in Column A.
1. Column Headers
   1. Event
   2. Place
   3. Enslaver ID (RN from Genealogy software)
   4. Date (of event)
   5. Source (document)
   6. Page (in source)
   7. Description (text from source)
   8. Combined combine the first 7 cells in row into one column with ";" separator.
   9. Final column is a copy of the 'combined' with only the text- not the formula. THIS is the cell pasted into RootsMagic.

Color code the event in Column A once it has been entered into RootsMagic to denote completion.

Important: Replace all semi-colons and colons in the original text with periods. The semi-colons and colons are used to facilitate data extraction in python and cannot have this punctuation within the text of a cell in the spreadsheet.
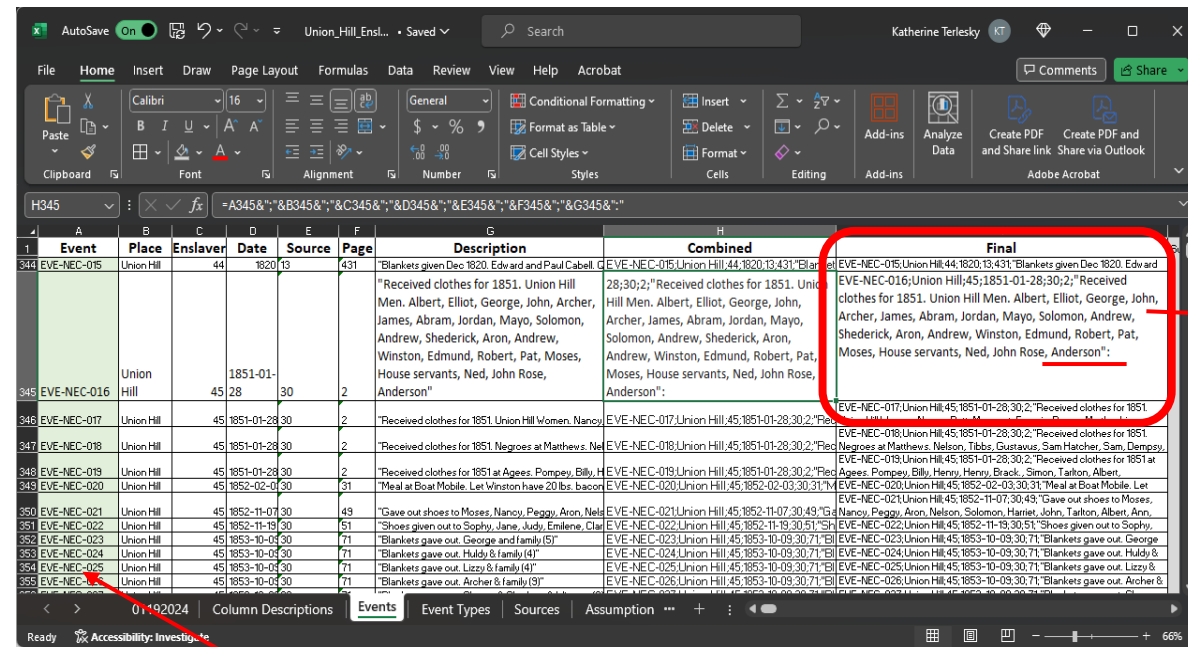
Moving data from the Events Spreadsheet to RootsMagic

RootsMagic Genealogy Software
Manually add people starting with oldest event dates.
Manually add events and the associated data for each person.
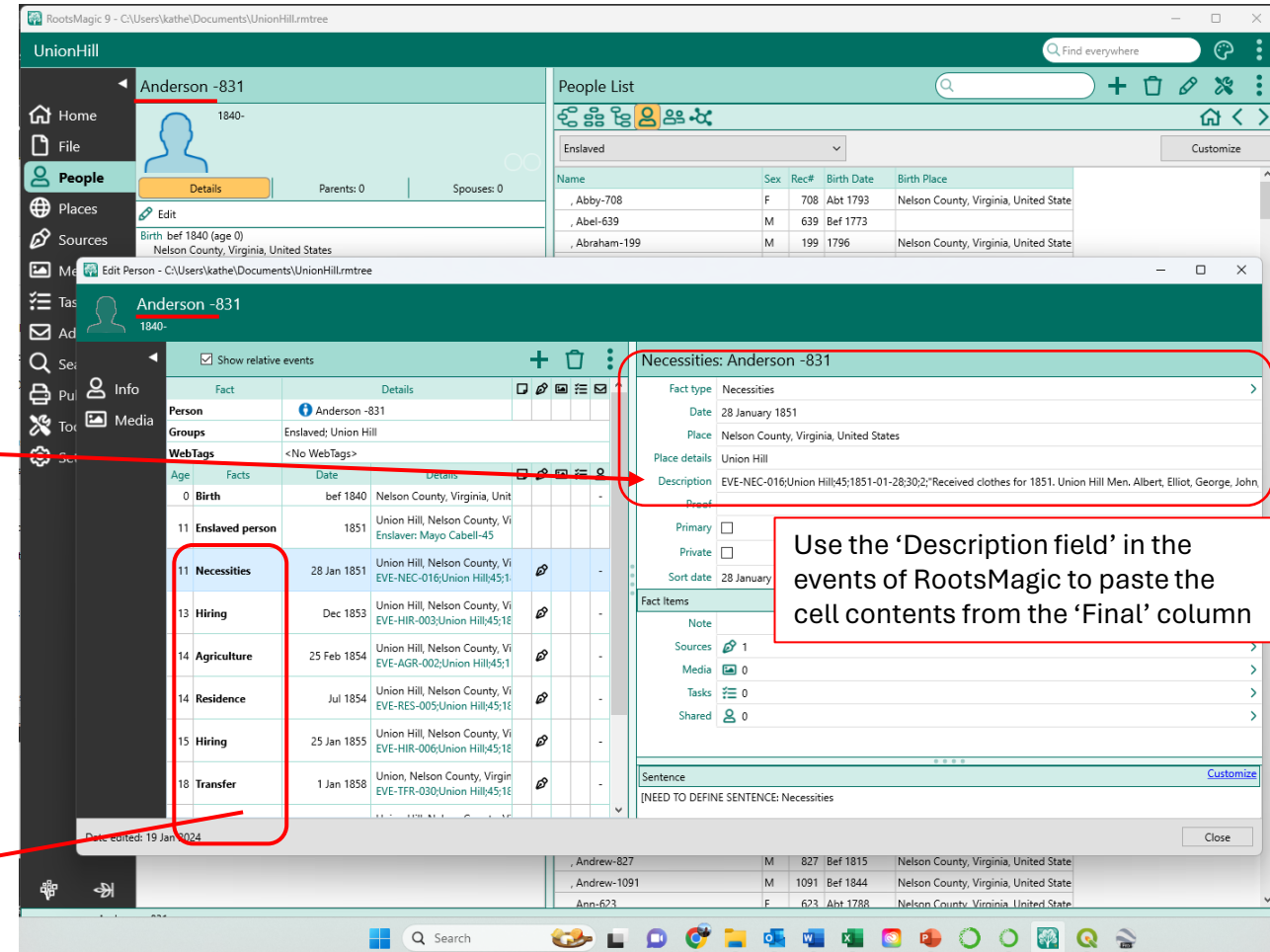
Event types in RootsMagic with the Spreadsheet compiled information captured

Use the 'Description field' in the events of RootsMagic to paste the cell contents from the 'Final' column

Establish Groups to bin people as "Enslaved', 'Enslaver', 'Overseer', and 'Union Hill'

Using the 'Custom Report' Feature to extract Person data

Toggle who is included using established groups for Enslaved, enslavers and overseers

RootsMagic

Publish Custom Reports
1. Person Data: 3 separate csv files
   1. EnslavedPersonData_date.csv
   2. EnslaverPersonData_date.csv
   3. OverseerPersonData_date.csv

Bring into Jupyter notebook

Jupyter Notebooks

EXCEL STEP REQUIRED
For groups that may have more than one spouse- split these out in Excel into separate columns prior to uploading into Jupyter notebooks.
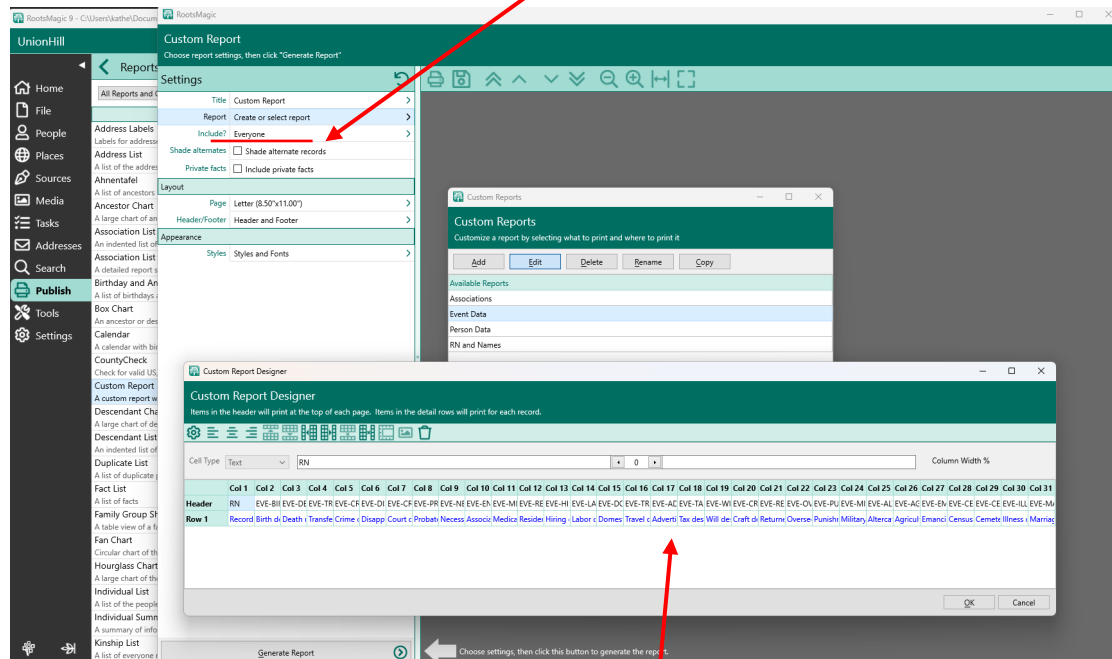
Fields pulled from each person for the Person Data
This data is created as each new person is added to RootsMagic

Using the 'Custom Report' Feature to extract events by person attached to their unique RN

RootsMagic

Toggle who is included using established groups for Enslaved, enslavers and overseers

Publish Custom Reports
1. Event Data: 2 separate reports
    1. EnslavedEventData_date.csv
    2. OverseerEventData_date.csv
2. List of people at Union Hill
    1. UnionHill_date.csv

Bring into Jupyter notebook

Jupyter Notebooks

Custom Report – Event Data
Create Custom Report for Events that grabs the 'Description' field for all events.
Save as text file, then use Text Import Wizard in Excel to bring data into a csv. Going straight from RootsMagic to csv will cause misinterpretation of numbers and dates.

EXCEL STEP REQUIRED
Remove all quotation marks from the csv file before uploading to Jupyter. The quotation marks complicate manipulation in python.

Final Data Prep using Python in Jupyter Notebooks
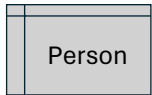
The next slide shows the work-flow in in python

Step 1

All Enslaved Person Data by RN

↓

Data Clean up steps

↓

Calculate Child Field from Mother and Father fields

↓

Bring in list of people just at Union Hill and reduce the enslaved list down to those at Union Hill

↓

Add column for status "enslaved"

↓

Person

Person DataFrame

jupyter
Notebook
6.5.4
Web-based, interactive computing notebook environment. Edit and run human-readable docs while describing the data analysis.

Launch

Step 2

All Enslaved Event Data by Person RN
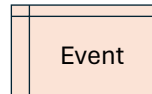One column for each event type

↓

Use wide-to-long to stack event types by row

↓

Separate multiple events into new columns on ";" designation at end of each event
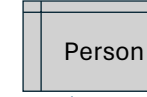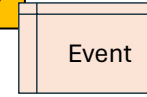
↓

Use wide-to-long to stack unique events by row

↓

Break apart using ";" separator into new columns (Event ID', 'Place', 'Enslaver ID', 'Date', 'Source', 'Page', 'Description')
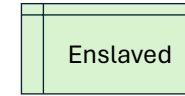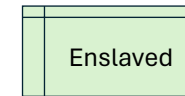
↓

Data Clean up steps

Event

Event DataFrame

Step 3

Event → Person

Bring Event data into Person data making 'Enslaved' DataFrame

↓

Enslaved

→ Add source data to each row
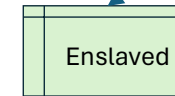
Enslaved

↓

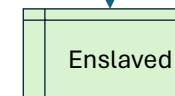**Step 4** — Repeat steps 1-3 for Overseer data

Step 5 — Bring in Enslaver Person data

Enslaved

- Add Prefix to unique ID
- Combine children to 1 column. Spouses to 1 column.
- Add list of overseers by enslaver to each enslaved
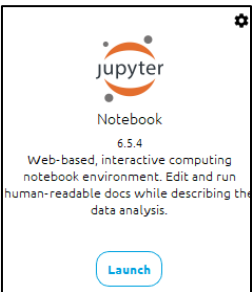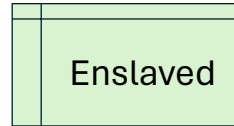- Bring in lat long for each place

Step 6

Enslaved

↓

Export to csv for JDSP

Step 7

Descriptive Analytics in python

Descriptive Analytics

Step 7

Enslaved

Final DataFrame

Completeness of dataset
- % fields complete

**Descriptors of dataset
Person Data**
- # people by sex
- # people by sex and status (enslaved, enslaver, overseer)
- # enslaved persons by enslaver
- Given name analytics on Enslaved

**Descriptors of dataset
Event Data**
- # unique events
- # events by location
- # events by year, decade
- # events per person
- Event types and persons identified through journals