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Slave Trials in Anderson and Spartanburg
Counties, South Carolina, 1818-1861

CP-sent. 11.03.
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ICPSR 8674

SLAVE TRIALS IN ANDERSON AND SPARTANBURG COUNTIES,
SOUTH CAROLINA, 1818-1861

(ICPSR 8674)

Principal Investigator

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First ICPSR Edition
February, 1989

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Acknowledgement of Assistance

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Michael S. Hindus

SLAVE TRIALS IN ANDERSON AND SPARTANBURG COUNTIES, SOUTH CAROLINA,
1818-1861 (ICPSR 8674)

SUMMARY: This dataset is part of a larger data collection effort conducted by the principal investigator to study crime, justice, and penal reform in Massachusetts and South Carolina from 1760 to 1880. Data are presented in this file on over 600 slave trials in two counties of ante-bellum South Carolina from 1818 to 1861. The data were obtained from the Anderson and Spartanburg counties surviving public records of the Courts of Magistrates and Freeholders. Included are variables documenting the accused crime, verdict, punishment, and item stolen (if applicable), as well as the defendant's name, sex, status, owner, and date of the trial. CLASS IV

UNIVERSE: Male and female slaves tried for accused crimes in Spartanburg and Anderson counties, South Carolina.

NOTE: The data contain blanks and undefined codes, which are explained in the codebook.

EXTENT OF COLLECTION: 1 data file

DATA FORMAT: Card Image

File Structure: rectangular

Cases: 1,086

Variables: 16

Record Length: 80

Records Per Case: 1

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Code for "Study 323"

Slave Trials in Anderson and Spartanburg Counties, South
Carolina, 1818-1861

Column #

1-3	Number of Trial	
4-6	Number of Defendant (trials often contained several defendants)	
7-16	Names of defendant (if free black, then last name up to eight letters, then first initial)	
17	Status (SPSS VAR001)	
	1 -- slave	
	2 -- free	
18	Sex (VAR002)	
	1 -- Male	
	2 -- Female	
	9 -- Unknown	
19-20	Month of trial (VAR003)	
	(conventional notation used)	99 -- missing
21-22	Day of trial (VAR004)	
	(actual day of month)	99 -- missing
23-24	Year of trial (VAR005)	
	(last two digits of year)	99 -- missing
25	County (VAR006)	
	1 -- Anderson	
	2 -- Spartanburg	
26-27	Crime (VAR007)	
	1 -- larceny, stealing	
	2 -- animal stealing	
	3 -- grand larceny	
	4 -- petty larceny	
	5 -- receiving stolen goods	
	6 -- destroying property	
	7 -- breaking and entering	
	8 -- arson	
	9 -- burglary	
	10 -- murder	
	11 -- assault; assault and battery	
	12 -- assault and battery with intent to kill	
	13 -- drowning a child	
	14 -- poisoning	
	15 -- killing cattle	
	16 -- highway robbery	
	17 -- robbery	
	18 -- attempted assault	
	19 -- murder of a Negro	

20 -- lying
21 -- profanity
22 -- scandalous words
23 -- slander
24 -- insulting language
25 -- slander against white

30 -- gambling
31 -- drinking
32 -- Sabbathviolation

40 -- rape
41 -- attempted rape
42 -- assault with intent/rape
43 -- breaking and entering with intent to rape
44 -- soliciting illegal intercourse
45 -- attempted seduction of a white woman
46 -- indecency

50 -- vagrancy
51 -- misconduct
52 -- misdemeanor
53 -- felony
54 -- malicious mischief
55 -- disorderly conduct

60 -- harboring runaway
61 -- trading with a Negro
62 -- retailing spirits
63 -- forgery
64 -- slavestealing
65 -- trespass
66 -- leaving state and then returning illegally
67 -- conspiracy
68 -- contempt of court
69 -- selling goods

70 -- riot
71 -- fighting
79 -- threatening a white

80 -- resisting patrol
81 -- runaway
82 -- insurrection
83 -- attempted insurrection
84 -- carrying firearms
85 -- impudence
86 -- striking white
87 -- threatening
88 -- insolence and abuse to a white
89 -- insolent behavior (general)

90 -- accessory to grand larceny
 91 -- " " murder
 92 -- " " assault and battery
 93 -- " " larceny
 94 -- attempted burglary
 95 -- accessory to felony
 96 -- accessory to breaking and entering
 97 -- " " petty larceny
 98 -- misc.
 99 -- missing

28 Verdict (VAR008)

1 -- Acquitted
 2 -- Convicted
 9 -- Unknown

29-31 Number of Lashes (VAR009)

Actual number sentenced up to 998
 999 -- unknown

32 Jail Term (VAR010)

1-6 -- actual term in weeks
 7 -- indefinite, term unknown [0 = undefined by principal investigator]
 8 -- longer than 6 weeks
 9 -- missing (used when entire punishment is unknown, therefore columns 29-33 will all read '9' in such cases)

33 Other punishment (VAR011)

1 -- Death
 2 -- Banished from state
 3 -- Set free because of age
 4 -- Sold as slave [0 = undefined by principal investigator]
 5 -- Fined
 6 -- Forced to return item stolen

34-43

Owner's Name [**]

Last name up to eight letters, then first initial

44-45

Item Stolen (VAR012)

1-- cotton	19-- trunk
2-- bacon	20-- poultry, fowl
3-- clothes	21-- meat
4-- leather	22-- pins
5-- guns	23-- mattress
6-- spoons	24-- nails
7-- iron	25-- wagon
8-- cornmeal	26-- ax
9-- money	27-- shovel
10-- washpot	28-- ham
11-- watermelon	29-- wood
12-- cloth	
13-- corn	
14-- wheat	
15-- watch	
16-- fiddle	
17-- pocketbook	
18-- boots	

[**] For this variable, the data has zero and nine codes which are not defined. In this case, the zero codes appear to correspond to defendants listed as free and the nine codes appear to represent unknown names of owners.