

In this paper I hypothesize that poverty in the antebellum United States did not correlate so much with lack of money or wealth, so much as with access to the markets of the Atlantic world that allowed one access to wealth's signifiers. The paper explores these issues through explorations of the history of the Reed gold mine in Cabarrus County, N.C., and the account books of North Carolina notables John Carson, John Hogg and Ebenezer Pettigrew. Though all four were "wealthy" men, their access with the Atlantic market differed, as did their perceivable wealth or poverty.

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