

\$5,000, a mere fraction of its actual worth.⁶¹ The final settlement agreement between the heirs summarized their painful experiences:

. . .whereas owing to the embarrassed situation of the estate of the late Samuel Dickinson of the town of Edenton, it has been impossible for the Executors of the said Samuel to pursue his intention in the manner expressed in his last will, and they have been compelled to make sales of property not contemplated by the said Samuel, whereby injury has been done to all the legatees and it is difficult and perhaps impossible to ascertain the exact loss sustained by each. . . .⁶²

Mrs. Dickinson and her family were far from destitute, however, as she was an heiress in her own right as discussed. Moreover, the surviving Dickinson landholdings were still considerable: a 5,000 acre tract along the Alligator River known as the "Frying Pan"; the "Eastern Tract" consisting of 2,800 acres in Tyrrell County, and some 1,400 acres in Washington County.⁶³ With her son John managing (actually mismanaging in this case) Blenheim, Mrs. Dickinson assumed the managerial duties of the plantations above in conjunction with her son-in-law Nathaniel Bond. A well-educated woman, Mrs. Dickinson seems to have been interested in the problems of agricultural science as well as the social graces, and she sold and purchased slaves, hired and fired overseers, and expanded her plantations' farm acreage seeking greater productivity.⁶⁴ Edenton newspapers for the period also reveal that she was not lackadaisical about pursuing runaway slaves either, often advertising rewards for their capture and return.

20 DOLLARS REWARD

Run away from the subscriber upwards of a year past, a likely negro fellow, named Frank, commonly known