

## **Rachael's Will**

**by John Cantey Knight**

I summed Rachael's will and realized  
that this was the tally. Fertile acres are priced  
at a premium. Her personal possessions:  
rugs, furniture, books and china are evaluated.  
All appraised, a pecuniary worth is set to belongings  
touched, walked upon, seen, read, lived with  
for a lifetime. Slaves are numbered, named, assessed.  
Script describes attributes, temperaments, relationships.  
A fair and honest evaluation set at the end—perhaps  
with a plea—they are “a family;” these men were  
faithful servants; or this young girl provided  
kindness beyond measure throughout a long illness.  
Ascertaining that a female in her prime was worth  
five hundred dollars in 1840's currency, I search for  
something to tie it together, make sense. Three-dollar  
rugs, ten-dollar beds evade the answers.  
What are these things worth in today's marketplace?  
The next section is livestock: four pair matched  
mule teams it would seem.