

**D. H. Turner**  
Reporter Fourth Judicial Circuit  
Camden, Alabama

Camden, Ala., April 1, 1913.

Mr. H. C. Nixon,  
Merrelliton, Ala.



My Dear Sir:-

Your favor of recent date received. I take pleasure in furnishing the following information regarding slavery.

#### CABINS AND QUARTERS

The cabins were generally one- and two-roomed. They were constructed of pine poles, had plank windows and floors, and were ceiled.

The slaves were required to make their own furniture. This was plain, rude, and consisted mainly of a table, benches, and a few chairs.

The cabins had one and two rooms. A slave family was housed in a two-room cabin.

The rooms were all ceiled up well, and were very comfortable in winter.

#### CLOTHING, SHOES, ETC.

The slaves were furnished with good warm clothing which was made of kerseys and osnaburg.

They were allowed four suits a year. These were made by the white women and the negro seamstresses on the place. The "Lady of the White House" superintended the making.

#### FOOD

Their food consisted mainly of bacon, bread, potatoes and peas.

3 1/2 to 4 pounds of meat was the allowance per week. They had little "extra patches" which they worked at odd times and made money to purchase extras.

They did their cooking at night for the following day. They generally ate their breakfast at home and carried their dinner to the fields in little bucket.

#### WORK AT THE HOUSE, IN THE FIELD, IN TOWN, ETC.

Their work was mainly ploughing, hoeing, and splitting rails, and any kind of work that would naturally be performed about a plantation. The work hours was from sun-up to sun-down. They were allowed holidays at Christmas and on 4th July.

Document 4: "D.W. McIntosh letter," H.C. Nixon Responses to Questionnaire on Slavery, LPR91, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama, page 1.

**B. H. Turner**  
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2

The old, young, and infirm, did nothing much; but were well cared for.

I know of no instance of slaves working in cotton factories etc.

A slave did from two to three times as much work as the average negro of today.

The slaves took great interest in the master's welfare, as a rule

#### MONEY MADE BY SLAVES

The slaves made a little money from a "patch" which they worked when they finished their task, but they did not accumulate anything.

I know of no case where they bought their freedom.

They made cotton and produce, which they sold to merchants.

They were not rented out by their masters, but sometimes an estate would put the slaves "on the block" and rent them out.

I do not know of any instance where a slave hired his time from the master and worked out for wages or by contract.

#### FAMILY LIFE OF SLAVES

The marriage ceremony was performed then, as today, a negro preacher officiating.

The marriage relation was fairly well observed, and in some instances the negroes were true as the white people.

#### AMUSEMENTS

Bones were the main instruments used besides the banjo and fiddle, also patting their hands.

#### EDUCATION

Most of the teaching that was done, was by the white boys. A few of the slaves could read, but only a very few could write. They were very good at figuring and counting, as they generally had a good memory.

The mulattoes were smarter than the blacks, as a rule, though some of the pure negroes showed remarkable aptitude.

#### RELIGION

The religion then was about the same as now. The minister would read out two lines and the congregation

Document 4: "D.W. McIntosh letter," H.C. Nixon Responses to Questionnaire on Slavery, LPR91, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama, page 2.

3  
would take them up and sing.

The negroes and white some times had separate churches, but often the negroes used the white's church when they had no services. Also when the white's had preaching, a certain part was set off for the negroes to use and they attended freely. I have known communities that had negro preacher's, in absence of white ministers.

The slaves as a rule had their own negro preachers, some of them remarkable.

They celebrated the rites of baptism and communion. Nearly all of the slaves attended church.

There was no Sunday School.

They belonged mostly to the Baptist and Methodist church.

#### MORALITY

They did not have a high sense of morality. They would steal, fight, drink, gamble etc., whenever a good opportunity presented itself.

Only a few of the slave women were virtuous, but some were.

#### PATROL, PASSES, and RUN-A-WAYS

Passes were granted for the slave to go from one masters premises to another's. This was required all the time by some, but only a few.

Where it was required, it was the patrols duty to see that they had their passes, and when they did not they were given a licking--from 12 to 39 licks.

A slave would sometimes run away when they feared a whipping from the master. They would take to the woods, or hide with some other negro. It was very seldom that they tried to get entirely out of the country.

#### TREATMENT OF SLAVES

The slaves were whipped for stealing mostly, and for disobedience, stealing, fighting, etc.

The master or overseer did the whipping. Sometimes the negroes did it.

Most of the masters whipped their slaves, but a few did not. Swin McIntosh never whipped his slaves.

It was very seldom that a slave was cruelly treated by his owner. They were well taken care, always had good and sufficient food and clothing.

I know of no instance where the community interfered in any way on account of bad treatment.

Only a small portion of the slaves were treated badly.

I cant recall, but there were a good many in-

Document 4: "D.W. McIntosh letter," H.C. Nixon Responses to Questionnaire on Slavery, LPR91, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama, page 3.

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4

stances where slaves show remarkable devotion for their masters.

The slaves were punished for crime then as now. When sentenced to hang, the state reimbursed the owner to the extent of one-half the value of criminal.

Sometimes families were divided by sale, and division of estate, but whenever possible families remained intact. It was only when it was impossible to keep them together that they were divided.

The sick were cared for just the same as were the whites or master's family. They were generally brought up to the "White house" and well cared for by the owners, doctors provided, and every attention given.

The mothers and children were well taken care of. A child was worth about \$100.00.

#### EMANCIPATION

A slave was emancipated for faithful service, or where there was a special attachment between master and slave.

I know of no instance where emancipated slave returned to voluntary servitude.

There were a few in this community opposed to slavery, but there were no plans made for gradual emancipation, or colonization.

No insurrections were planned or suspected in this neighborhood.

#### FREE NEGROES

There was only one free negro in our community.

He made his living by brick masonry.

Did not own any slaves.

No special regulations for free negro.

#### NON-SLAVE-HOLDING-WHITES

The condition of the poor white was about the same then, as now.

I lived in Wilcox County, Alabama, and my answers are based on conditions as they there existed.

Yours truly,

Document 4: "D.W. McIntosh letter," H.C. Nixon Responses to Questionnaire on Slavery, LPR91, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama., page 4.

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