

Valley Head Ala
Jan'y 25 1913

H.C. Nixon Esq.
Merrellton Ala.

Dear Sir: - Replying to
yours of 22^d Inst concerning
Slavery, I have to say: My
Father was the largest slave
owner in this (Seale) County.

The owners of slaves here
were generally kind and humane
to their colored people who
were well fed and comforta-
bly clothed and lived in
comfortable and convenient
houses. ~~They were well fed~~
~~and well clothed~~

They were worked moderately
and were well cared for in
sickness. Also, they had
holidays specially Saturday
afternoons, also holidays
4th July, Christmas &c.

The houses were well sup-
plied with ^{good things} inexpensive furni-
ture.

Cooking and eating arrange-
ments were cleanly and whole some.

Document 3: "J.W. Winston letter," H.C. Nixon Responses to Questionnaire on
Slavery, LPR91, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery,
Alabama., page 1.

with an abundance of good nourishing food.

They had lights, candles, Pine torches, ^{lamps} lamps, &c. and good wood fires in cold weather.

They had plenty of house room ~~there~~ were not crowded.

They had comfortable clothing suitable to the changing seasons.

They were not paid regular wages.

The field hands came to the Kitchen and Cabins for their regular meals.

They generally had Holidays, Christmas, 4th July, Sunday, Thanksgiving days &c.

Some of the women cooked and did work about the house.

Others preferred to do light work in the fields and Gardens.

They were not generally put onto jobs that ~~required~~ ^{required} much skill. However, some of them were ingenious & skillful. Some of them were

good house carpenters, others
good shoe makers, black
smiths, basket makers &c.

They generally manifested
and displayed great interest
in the masters well fare and
prosperity. They ^{earned} ~~made~~
some money by working for
themselves on holidays and
Saturday after noons. I don't
know of any that bought
their own freedom.

Occasionally they were
hired out by their masters
to humane and trustworthy
farmers.

I don't know of any in-
stance where a slave hired his
own time from his master &
then worked out for wages
or by contract.

The ceremony of marriage
was performed as was the ceri-
mony of the whites.

Marriage relations were
generally well observed.

I know of no instance of
great and lasting grief caused

by separation of husband and wife or of child from Parents

They were generally kept together in life

Corn Shuckings & Christmas celebrations were times of great rejoicing & merriment and many quaint and beautiful old songs were heard

For music: Banjos, Fiddle & Jew's harps and singing were used. They seemed to compose many of their own songs some of which were beautiful and pathetic.

Quite a number learned to read and write. They were generally taught by the young white people boys & girls. Many ~~could~~ ~~read and~~ ~~write~~ Many could figure, count and correctly compute or estimate the worth of merchandise, farm products &c.

The mulattos seemed smarter than the pure negroes.

They frequently held religious

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

services attended with much shouting, singing & exhortation. They generally had services in their cabins and in some places they had churches, ~~some~~ ~~small~~ ~~buildings~~. They celebrated Baptism and Communion as much as they could like the whites. Most of them attended church.

They were generally Baptist Methodist with some Presbyterians. In most instances their religion affected their lives.

There were not many instances of stealing, fighting, drinking, cursing, gambling &c. Passes were not always necessary in this part of the country. We had no patrol in this part of the country excepting a very short while just after the late civil war.

There were very few runaways. The 20th army corps, U.S. troops (perhaps 25000 strong)

Document 3: "J.W. Winston letter," H.C. Nixon Responses to Questionnaire on Slavery, LPR91, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama, page 5.

commanded by Genl Jeff B. Davis of the Federal army camped here on this farm about two weeks just before the battle of Chickamauga in September 1863

Some of our slaves went away or were forced away by the Federals

Some of these returned to us some few days later & remained with us till close of the war. Some are still here on my place

Our slaves were well treated here, very little flogging

They were well fed and well clothed & worked only moderately and had regular holidays

The sick were well cured for including the mothers and children. Some of our emancipated slaves voluntarily returned to us.

There were very few free negroes in this section

Document 3: "J.W. Winston letter," H.C. Nixon Responses to Questionnaire on Slavery, LPR91, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama, page 6.

They owned no slaves. No
special regulation for them.
A large part of the com-
munity here were not owners
of slaves.
My statements are
based on what I saw and
heard here in De Kalb County
where I have resided about
68 years.
Respectfully
J. W. Winston

Document 3: "J.W. Winston letter," H.C. Nixon Responses to Questionnaire on Slavery, LPR91, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama, page 7.