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MARSHALL & BRUCE CO., NASHVILLE, TENN.

Tuskegee Ala 4/5th 1913.

Mr H. C. Nixson

Merrellton Ala

Dear Sir:-

Your letter in regard to the subject of Slavery received and noted. My father being a large Slave owner before the war I think I can answer your questions correctly.

Answer to question 1st The Slave owners generly furnished two room square loged Cabins, with kitchen attached well ventilated - good & sufficient bedding Chairs & table -

2nd Sufficient amount of plates & utinsels -

3rd Taller Candles & fuel furnished by the farmer

4th Generly two sleeping rooms for each family

5th The Cabins were very comfortable in winter.

6th They wore good strong clothing

7th Three (3) Suits per annum.

8th They were made or had made by the owners wife.

9th Good home raised meat & bread, Molasses, rice & potatoes

10 The allowance per negro was 4 lbs meat, 2 pks meal - 2 qts Molasses or Symp & about & 5 # rice & 2 pks Potatoes - per week -

11" Got extras occasionally, but prefered substantials

12" The Cooking was done by good negro Cooks & was carried to the field by the dinner carries & water toters.

13 - Work at the house in the field, in town &c

Ans - House work consisted of Cleaning up the house every day, generally, plowing & hoeing and and planting in the fields,

The hours of work were from sun up to sun down, the holidays were on Saturdays.

The young were house girls, the very young played with the white Children. The infirm were waited on.

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY MRD

Jud

There were many skilled slaves, expert Carpenters, Shoemakers, Mechanics - few Carriage Makers -
I do not remember any slaves who worked in Cotton factories - & black Smiths -
The labor of to day Compared to slave labor is not as effective as slave labor especially in the farm -
Slave labor was superviced by a white overseer & property Cultivated, but now this done in a Careless way & poorly done - The slave did more work in one day than free labor does in two days -
The average slave showed a great deal of interest in his Masters welfare -

"Money Made by Slaves"

The Slave's master would allow them a patch of several acres to each family - & would have it worked like their own - but the slave would get the proceeds of the patch, & those who would save would accumulate enough in the course of time to buy their freedom, however most of them did not want to be free.
They made Cotton, Corn, & Vegitables - they sold it as they pleased -
They were sometimes hired or rented out by their Masters to parties under Contract to treat them right & not abuse them.
A Negro field hand would rent for from $300.00 to $400.00 per annum - the renter clothing them well - & feeding as well - Carpenters & Mechanics rented out for more Money - for instance a Black Smith.

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY

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I remember well that there was a Negro living in Tuskegee by the name of Harry Knight very industrious who hired his own time and finally bought himself & wife from his Master & raised a large & useful family and his son is now boss of the Street & yard in Tuskegee that the Confidence of all the white folks-

"Family life of Slaves"

The Marriage Ceremony was performed in a very simple way-
The Slave would tell his master that he wished to Marry the girl of his Choice and both would be Called up before the Master and after asking the Vows that are asked in a Marriages they were pronounced Man & wife- The marriage relations were observed a great deal better than they are now. I have known a great deal of devotion between husband & wife as Slaves- There was a very little Separation of husband & wife- and in fact I do not remember any. If a Master sold the husband the wife & Children were sold with him- and not Separated.

"Amusements"

They were allowed by their Masters to have their dances at night, Corn Shuckings, & Christmas Celebrations- I have heard their Songs often but do not now remember any particular- They would use the banjo- fiddle and bones mostly at their merry Makings. & the Masters Children would attend, & the Slaves were the happiest people on earth-

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Education

A good many could read & write the masters children would teach them - They did most of their counting from memory - for instance - my father had two negroes that could weigh from 50 to 100 baskets of cotton in cotton picking time, and could give the correct weights of every basket & the name of the picker. I have tested them often -

Some of the mulatoes were smarter than the pure negroes & mostly made house servants - even the black negro was prefered.

"Religion"

The slaves would be preched to mostly by white preachers employed by the masters - They would be preched to often on the plantation in churches erected by the master - & when the white churches were sufficiently near they were allowed to take the back seats and gallorys - Where a black preacher was competent to preach he was allowed to preach to them also - They celebrated baptism & communion like the whites - Church discipline was administered by the whites - They would all attend church - They were taught in sunday school by the employed white preachers on the plantation. They belonged mostly to the methodist church - Their religion had a good affect on some of their lives & some it did not - Some of them were excitable in their devotions.

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Morality

During Slavery, they would occasionly steal, but very seldom as they were generally well fed & clothed & housed. Seldom fought. Cursing & gambling was not allowed nor was it practised.

The women were a great deal more virtuous than they are now. also the men.

"Patrol, Passes, & Run-a-ways."

Passes were granted by the Masts or overseers to make the Slave stay at home at night, as they were not allowed to visit off the farm without permission for fear they would get into trouble. The duties of the patrols was to keep peace in the neighborhood by requiring the Slave to have passes from the right source. It was the duty of the patrols to visit a fixed number of plantations every week & if any were caught who did not have passes to reprimand them & some times to lightly Chastize them. There were various reasons for running away but was not often done. they would sometimes get mad with the overseers & go to their Masters for Correction. They would sometimes go to the woods, but more often to their Masters if he did not live on the farm. & the Master would go with them to the overseer & have the wrong Corrected.

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"Treatment Of Slaves-

They were whipped sometimes for disobeying orders & neglecting their duties- the owners would not allow them cruelly treated by no one. The overseer gave by did the whipping when the Master said it was necessary. I never knew my father to whip his slaves- We had one slave owner in our County who was cruel to his slaves by not giving them sufficient food or clothing and he was arrested & brought before the court & was punished according to law- The Community would interfear when it was known that a man was cruel to his slaves, and he was Ostracized in society. There was a very small portion treated badly. There was a great deal of devotion between Master & slave. My father & Col Fleweellen of Barbor County this State went to Louisiana & Texas before the war & each bought a plantation in Texas, Came home & intended to sell their slaves & buy a new lot in Texas & Louisiana rather than go to the expense of Moving them- & being my father's oldest son went to his plantation 11 miles from

Just got to close a deal to sell them & they got around him and cried in such a manner, saying they did not want to belong to any one except him that, they aroused his sympathy so much that he could not part from them & that Col Flewellen gave up the idea of going West & sold the plantation they had bought in Texas & remained in Alabama & their slaves were freed on their hands- Col Flewellens slaves did the same way as did my fathers- I had one of my father's slaves in the army with me during the

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The whole time of the war between the State, and he was perfectly devoted to me & I to him & when Gen Lee surrendered to Gen Grant at Appomattox on the 9th day of April 1865, I told this Slave he was free & go where he pleased that he was no longer a Slave - he said with tears in his Eyes that he would not leave me & would return with me home, which he did & lived near me in our town until he died about 3 years ago - My three brothers who were in the army were treated the same way by those they had with them as Cooks - & Strange to say there were four of us in the army & we had four brothers with us as Cooks, and said to State they are all dead except myself - There was hardly ever a Crime Committed by the Slaves -

Families were seldom ever divided by sale or divisions -

The sick were taken good care of - The Physicians were engaged or employed by the Master by the year to attend his Slaves -

There was an old woman on the plantation who looked after the babies while their Mothers were at work -

"Emancipation"

A good many of my fathers Slaves Said they did not want to be freed

And they remained on the plantation Several years after they were freed in fact until my father Sold the plantation - I do not recall any one who was [illegible] to Slavery.

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I heard that some of the slave holders spoke of gradual emancipation - or colonization - I mean during the war - There were no slave insurrections planned or suspected in my region - the only one on record as I know was John Brown at Harpers Ferry which we all are familiar with - attending.

"Free Negroes."

There were one family of free negroes in our section - they made a living by working for the white people - they did not own any slaves except their own family - there were no special regulations for them.

"Non-Slave-holding Whites"

We Non-Slave-owners respected the slave owner, & the slave owner respected the industrious whites - The Non-slave, holding whites treated the free negroes and slaves kindly - The poor white people in my community were totally well fixed and were industrious, and would get aid and work from those who were in good circumstances. I will add that the negro of to day does not live as long as the slaves did, they are not thrifty and do not have regular hours & do not take as good care of themselves as they were by their old masters, which they acknowledge. & there is more crime committed by them now. We never knew of a Rape case before the negro was made free. The South has been slandered by some northern historians & I hope some day they will be vindicated & the facts will be known. - I have answered all of your questions I hope satisfactory - Let me hear from you Yours Truly

John H. Alexander