Valley Head Ala
Jany 25 1913.

H. C. Nixon Esq
Mervellton Ala.

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

The owners of slaves here were generally kind and humane to their colored people who were well fed and comfortably 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 supplied with good though inexpensive furniture.

Cooking and eating arrangements were cleanly and wholesome

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with an abundance of good nourishing food.

They had lights Candles, Pine torches, & later Lamps &c. and good wood fires in cold weather

They had plenty of house room 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. Sundays. Thanksgiving days &c.

Some of the women cooked and did work about the house

Others prefered 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 ingenuous & 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 some money by working for themselves on holidays and Saturday afternoons. I dont know of any that bought thier own freedom

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

I dont know of any instance where a slave hired his own time from his master & then worked out for wages or by contract.

The ciremony of marriage was performed as was the ciremony of the whites.

Marriage relations were generally well observed.

I know of no instance of great and lasting grief caused

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by seperation 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 heared
For music: Banjos. Fiddle Jews 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~~
Many culd 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

services attended with much shouting. singing & exhortations They generally had services in thier cabbins and in some places they had churches ~~& school 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 thier religion affected thier 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. US troops (perhaps 25000 strong)

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commanded by Genl Jeff C. 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 cared for including the mothers and children. Some of our emancipated slaves voluntarily returned to us.

There were very few free negroes in this section

They owned no slaves. No special regulation for them
A large part of the community here were not owners of slaves
My statements are based on what I saw and heard here in DeKalb County where I have resided about 68 years

Respectfully
J N Winston

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