

The Slave Narratives: Unchained Memories

Day 1

1. Introduction to the Slave Narratives
2. James Green, Texas
 - a. Sold from his mother as a boy
3. Sarah Gudger, 101 years old, vol. 11, North Carolina
 - a. Very hard life: worked all day, often cold and hungry
4. Charley Williams, vol. 13, Oklahoma
 - a. Bells and horns: sent slaves to the fields to work from sunrise to sunset
5. Francis Black, vol. 16, Texas
 - a. Bought for \$200.00 as a playmate for the master's children
6. Martin Jackson, age 90. Texas
 - a. Earliest memory: His master presented him to his son as his property. His new master was 2 years old
 - b. Never went to school or learned to read or write
7. Henry Coleman, vol. 14, South Carolina
 - a. His job was to hang from the ceiling above the table during dinner and fan away the flies with peacock feathers while the master's family ate
8. Jennie Proctor, vol. 16, Texas
 - a. Had to tend to the master's children and clean house
 - b. One day she found a biscuit and ate it because she was so hungry. Her mistress found out and beat her with a broom. Jennie fought back and was whipped with a Cat-O-Nine Tails. Later, salt was rubbed into her wounds.
 - c. Not allowed to go to school. Stole a speller, studied the book with a pine torch at night, learned to read.
 - d. If caught with a book, would be severely punished.
9. Elizabeth Sparks, vol. 17, Virginia
 - a. A house slave, forced to stand and knit into the night, sleep standing up, hit with a switch if found asleep.
10. Cato Carter, vol. 16, Texas
 - a. Had a white father, house slave, drove a carriage, given money for clothes

11. Isaac and Rosa, 2 slave children, 1860
12. Mary Reynolds, vol. 16, Texas
 - a. Had a white father, played with white children, visited by father given clothes
13. Rev. Ishrael Massie, Virginia
 - a. Rape of black women by white masters common
 - b. Black husbands powerless to stop it
14. Fannie Berry
 - a. Master tried to attack her, but she fought back. Fought off the master.
 - b. Some slaves who resisted were beaten or killed.
15. Mary Estes Peters
 - a. Her mother was raped by 3 sons of her master – threw her on the ground, tied her with rope
 - b. When the mistress came home, she beat her 3 sons for what they had done
 - c. Mary Estes Peters was the product of the rape
16. Sarah Ashley, vol. 16, Texas
 - a. Had to pick at least 300 pounds of cotton and carry the bag to the Gin.
 - b. Don't work, get whipped until the slave had blisters
17. Charles Grandy, Virginia
 - a. Describes whipping – stripped of clothes, lay flat and staked to the ground, whipped until the blood came
 - b. Whipped straight, then checker you, cut flesh in squares
 - c. Whippings used to terrorize – public spectacles
18. William Colbert, vol. 1, Alabama
 - a. Saw his brother, January whipped
 - b. January never said a word while being whipped, he was whipped until the blood flowed down his chest. He asked for mercy.
 - c. Whipped slaves often had salt and red pepper rubbed into their wounds.

Day 2

1. Katie Darling, vol. 16, Texas
 - a. When a slave died, master made a coffin, bury fast, no praying or singing
 - b. Put in the ground, hurry back to work
2. Willis Cofer, vol. 14, Georgia
 - a. Bury a slave on a Sunday, Funerals important, bring the community together, African past
3. Vinnie Brunson, vol. 3, Texas
 - a. Sing about everything, express feelings, comfort
4. John Crawford, vol. 16, Texas
 - a. Make up songs in the fields
5. Fannie Berry, Virginia
 - a. Sing when go to work in the morning
6. Jack and Rosa Maddox
 - a. Jack born in Georgia, mother died, huddled together with his brother, treated like animals
 - b. Rosa had a better master – Dr. Andrew, took care of slaves
7. Mary Reynolds, vol. 16, Texas
 - a. Could plant a vegetable garden, work at night
8. Louisa Adams, vol. 11, North Carolina
 - a. One pair of shoes a year, if wear out shoes, go barefoot
 - b. Brother wore out shoes and had no shoes for the winter. Feet cracked open, left blood tracks in the snow
9. Octavia George, vol. 13, Oklahoma
 - a. Children were fed in boxes and troughs, under the house, fed like animals
10. Sarah Ashley, vol. 16, Texas
 - a. Never got enough to eat, had to steal food
 - b. Charles Grandy – had to steal chickens
 - c. Shang Harris, vol. 4, Georgia – masters complained about slaves stealing food, first theft was slaves from Africa
11. Beverly Jones, Virginia
 - a. Had to sit in her master's church and listen to them preach obedience and hard work to the slaves. Be a good servant and you will go to heaven.

12. Wash Wilson, vol. 16, Texas

- a. If slave heard the song, Steal Away to Jesus, it meant a religious meeting would take place at night.
- b. Masters did not like the meetings, but slaves would slip away at night and sing and pray all night.

13. Mary Reynolds, vol. 16, Texas

- a. Slaves would pray for the end of beatings, pray for shoes, enough food to eat, fresh meat.

14. Marshall Butler, vol. 4, Georgia

- a. Needed a pass to visit other plantations. "Paddy Rollers" (Paddle Rollers) would patrol the area looking for slaves and runaways. They would catch slaves without a pass.
- b. Marshall was caught when he went to see a girl on another plantation, he was caught and whipped 30 times. It was worth it to see the girl.

15. Fannie Berry, Virginia

- a. Slaves would go to dances, go courting, have marriages
- b. Danced respectfully, girls wore dresses, men wore clean shirts
- c. No sinful dancing

16. Lucindy Lawrence Jurdon, vol. 1, Alabama

- a. When slaves went courting, string chestnuts, smile at the fellas

17. Mary Reynolds, vol. 16, Texas

- a. Father was a free man living in the North
- b. His father wanted to buy his mother when he first saw her.
- c. The master refused, so he married her anyway and worked the fields with the slaves.

18. Temple Herndon Durham, 103 years old, vol. 11, North Carolina

- a. Married Exter Durham on the front porch of the big house, had a big wedding.
- b. She wore a white dress made out of window curtains.
- c. They "Jumped the Broomstick" to see who would be the boss of the household.
- d. After the wedding, Exter had to go back to his plantation. He visited every Sat. night, they had 11 children.

- e. Marriages had no legal standing – couples could be broken up and sold

19. Rose Williams, Texas

- a. Forced to marry a slave named Rufus at the age of 16.
- b. Did not want to live with Rufus.
- c. The master wanted the two to marry so they would have strong children.
- d. Marry him or be whipped at the stake – What should she do? Do what the master wants – yield.

20. Sarah Frances Shaw Graves, vol. 10, Missouri

- a. Her mother was allotted – that meant that the owner made a down payment on her – a mortgage to be paid monthly – a chattel mortgage.

21. Laura Clark, age 87, vol. 1, Alabama

- a. As cotton grew profitable, slavery spread and grew, and moved west
- b. Millions of slaves were forcibly sold and transported.
- c. 1/3 of families were split up, 1/5 of children sold away from their parents.
- d. When she was 6 or 7 years old, a man bought 10 children, but did not buy the mothers – they were left behind
- e. Mother told the caretaker, Julie, to take care of her, would never see her again, and to raise her for God.
- f. Kids given candy, did not know why their mothers were so upset. Her mother's name was Rose Powell.

22. W.L. Bost, vol. 11, North Carolina

- a. Saw men come with droves of slaves
- b. Slaves nearly froze to death, speculators drove the slaves, made them all run to keep them warm

23. Slave Auctions

- a. Trade yards in Virginia, New Orleans, thousands of slaves waiting to be sold.
- b. Prepare slaves for auction – clean them, give them meat grease to pretend feeding the slaves meat.
- c. Sell children to one man, mothers and fathers to another
- d. Put on the block – 18 to 30 years old brought in the most money.
- e. Men called buck, women called wench

Day 3

1. Robert Falls, vol. 15, Tennessee
 - a. Had to live his life over, he would die fighting rather than be a slave again.
 - b. Father was a fighter, sold 4 times
 - c. Slaves would show open defiance, running was the strongest form of defiance. Caught – mutilation, death
 - d. 50,000 slaves tried to run a year – most were caught by the Paddy Rollers.
2. Cato Carter, vol. 16, Texas
 - a. A slave was working in the field – he kept jerking the mules and needed to be punished.
 - b. Master got mad and sent Cato to kill the slave – gave him a gun to shoot him.
 - c. Cato begged the master to not make him do this. Cato said no – he can't kill a man
 - d. Cato went to the slave and told him the master wanted him to kill the slave. Cato told him that they both had to run – hope to meet up with Harriet Tubman.
 - e. Ran away, but his hands weren't stained with blood.
3. Thomas Cole, vol. 3, Florida
 - a. Ran away the first chance he got.
 - b. Ran off the plantation while hunting, crossed the river, go north all day and all night – follow the north star
 - c. Blood hounds followed him, hope to meet Harriet Tubman, hope to get to Canada, hope to get to the underground railroad
4. Arnold Gragston, vol. 3, Florida
 - a. Did not want to get mixed up with the underground railroad.
 - b. One night he went to another plantation to go courting.
 - c. He met a pretty girl and was asked to take her to Ohio. He was scared, but decided to try to get the girl across the river.
 - d. He was scared and rowed the girl against a strong current, dark, and spent a long time rowing. Try to get to Ripley, Ohio, to the Freedom Stairway, get to a lighthouse.

- e. He saw a light – 2 men reached down and grabbed her – 1 man took his arm, ready to die
 - f. First trip – scared, but went back across and helped many escape and made 3 to 4 trips a month. He never saw any of the runaways
 - g. Eventually escaped with his wife – left Ohio and made his way to Detroit. They had 10 children and 33 grandchildren.
5. Mary Reynolds, vol. 16, Texas
- a. Knew a woman who ran away and was chased by the blood hounds.
 - b. She got caught in a tree. The dogs pulled her down, tore her naked, and ripped off her breasts. Could not breast feed her own children.
6. Katie Rowe, vol., 13, Oklahoma
- a. Master was angry when the Yankees came
 - b. He told the slaves that they would not go free. If they tried, they would be free – from life – he would kill them.
7. Private Spottswood Rice, Co. A, 67th US Colored Infantry
- a. One of 200,000 slaves and ex-slaves who enlisted in the Union army and navy.
 - b. Wrote a letter to his children. Let them know he would to forget them, want to see them, expect to come back and get his children. He will get them if it costs him his life.
8. William Moore, vol. 16, Texas
- a. His sister Mary came to him to tell him they were free, all the slaves came running. No one knew where to go or what to do.
9. Katie Rowe, vol. 13, Oklahoma
- a. The slaves heard the horn blow early in the cotton field
 - b. The slaves stopped working, wrong time for the horn. Decided to go in
 - c. Saw a man sitting in a chair, a Yankee
 - d. He asked the slaves if they knew what day it was – 4th of June, 1865 – want you to remember the day – today they were free.
 - e. It was the 4th of June, 1865, “I begin to live . . .”
10. Wash Ingram, vol. 16, Texas
- a. 350 slaves, turned loose a year later

- b. Said the government was going to give them 40 acres and a mule, but they didn't get anything.

11. Robert Falls, vol. 15, Tennessee

- a. Roads were full of free blacks, just walking
- b. See about someplace else, don't know where they were going, what they were going to do.
- c. Never have to be a slave again.