

Quotation #1

Uncle Big Jake sho' work de slaves from early mornin' till night. When you is in de field you better not lag none. When its fallin' weather de hands is put to work fixin' dis and dat. De women what has li'l chillen don't have to work so hard. Dey works 'round de sugar house and come 11 o'clock dey quits and cares for de babies till 1 o'clock, and den works till 3 o'clock and quits.

—Sarah Ford
(ex-slave, Texas)

Uncle Big Jake sure worked the slaves from early morning till night. When you are in the field, you'd better not lag behind. When it is raining or snowing the hands are put to work fixing this and that. The women who have little children don't have to work so hard. They work round the sugar house and at 11 o'clock they quit and care for the babies until 1 o'clock, and then they work until 3 o'clock and quit.

Sarah Ford, interviewed in Houston, Texas (no date), in *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, edited by George P. Rawick. Copyright © 1972 by George P. Rawick. Reproduced with permission of ABC-CLIO, LLC.

Quotation #2

My father wuz sold 'way from us when I wuz small. Dat wuz a sad time fer us. Mars wouldn't sell de mudders 'way from deir chillun so us lived on wid out de fear ob bein' sold. My pa sho' did hate ter leave us. He missed us and us longed fer him. He would often slip back ter us' cottage at night. Us would gahter 'round him an' crawl up in his lap, tickled slap to death, but he give us dese pleasures at a painful risk. When his Mars missed him he would beat him all de way home.

—Hannah Chapman
(ex-slave, Mississippi)

My father was sold away from us when I was small. That was a sad time for us. Master wouldn't sell the mothers away from their children, so we lived on without fear of being sold. My Pa sure did hate to leave us. He missed us and we longed for him. He would often slip back to our cottage at night. We would gather around him and crawl up in his lap, and he tickled us for a long time. But he gave us these pleasures at a painful risk. When his master missed him, he would beat him all the way home.

Hannah Chapman, interviewed in Simpson County, Mississippi (no date), in *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, edited by George P. Rawick. Copyright © 1972 by George P. Rawick. Reproduced with permission of ABC-CLIO, LLC.

Quotation #3

We had old ragged huts made out of poles, and some of de cracks chinked up wid mud and moss and some of dem wasn't. We didn' have no good beds, jes' scaffolds nailed up to de wall out of poles and de ole ragged buddin' throwed on dem. Dat sho' was hard sleepin' but even dat feel good to our weary bones after dem long hard days work in de field.

—Jenny Proctor
(ex-slave, Texas)

We had old ragged huts made out of poles, and some of the cracks were filled with mud and moss, and some weren't. We didn't have any good beds, just scaffolds nailed up to the wall made out of poles and old ragged bedding thrown on them. That sure was hard sleeping, but even that felt good to our weary bones after those long hard days of work in the fields.

Jenny Proctor, interviewed in Texas (no date), in *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, edited by George P. Rawick. Copyright © 1972 by George P. Rawick. Reproduced with permission of ABC-CLIO, LLC.

Quotation #4

One ob de cruelest things I ever seen done to a slave wuz done by my Master. He wanted to punish one ob de slaves what had done some 'em dat he didn't lak, a kinda stubborn one. He . . . hitched him to a plow an' plowed him jes' lak a hors. He beat him an' jerked him 'bout 'till he got all bloody an' sore, but ole Marse he kept right on day after day. Finally de buzzards went to flyin' over 'em . . . dem buzzards kept a flyin' an' old Marse got to being haunted by dat slave an' buzzards. He could alwas' see 'em an' hear de groans . . . an' he was hainted dat way de res' ob his life.

—Vinnie Busby
(ex-slave, Mississippi)

One of the cruelest things I ever saw done to a slave was done by my master. He wanted to punish one of the slaves who had done something that he didn't like. [The slave] was kind of a stubborn one. He took that slave and hitched him to a plow and plowed him just like a horse. He beat him and jerked him about until he got all bloody and sore, but the old master kept right on day after day. Finally, the buzzards were flying over them . . . those buzzards kept flying and the old master was haunted by that slave and the buzzards. He could always see them and hear the groans . . . And he was haunted that way for the rest of his life.

Vinnie Busby, interviewed in Rankin County, Mississippi (no date), in *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, edited by George P. Rawick. Copyright © 1972 by George P. Rawick. Reproduced with permission of ABC-CLIO, LLC.