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Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery in the United States From Interviews with Former Slaves; Volume: XIV; State: South Carolina; Part: 2; Page Number: 166. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

MASTER WAS NEVER SO MOROCIOUS
SLAVES CALLED COW-MEAT FISH
SLAVE BORN WITH A "CALL"

I come from Mt. Pleasant an' was bo'n January 15, 1855 on Mr. Lias Winning plantation on the Cooper River. I wus den six years ole w'en the war broke out an' could 'member a good many things. My ma an' pa bin name Anjuline an' Thomas Goodwater who had eight boys an' eight gals. I use to help my gran'ma 'round the kitchen who wus the cook for the fambly. I am the elder of the two who is alive. Peter, the one alive, live on my place now, but I ain't hear frum dem for two years. I don' know for certain dat he's alive or not.

In slavery the people use to go an' catch possums an' rabbits so as to hab meat to eat. De driber use to shoot cows an' in de night de slaves go an' skin um an' issue um 'round to all the slaves, 'speciall w'en cows come frum anodder plantation. He go 'round an' tell the slaves dey better go an' git some fish 'fore all go. Any time any one say e hab fish it wus understood e mean cow-meat. Our boss ain't nebber catch on nor did e ebber miss any cow. Gie Simmons, de collude driber was under Sam Black, the white overseer. Sam Black wusn't mean, he jus' had to carry out orders of Lias Winning, our master. Dere wus a vegetable garden dat had things for the year round so we could hab soup an' soup could be in the Big House.

One day w'en I wus 'bout fourteen I did supin an' ma didn' like it. A bunch of gals bin home an' ma wheel my shorts over my head an' start to beat me right 'fore the gals. Dey begged her not to lock me an' she got mad jus' for dat. I couldn't help myself cus she tie' de shirt over my head wood a string, my han's an' all wus tie' in de shirt wood the string. In hot wedder gals an' boys go in dere under shirts an' nothin' else.

Boys in dose days could fight but couldn' throw any one on the groun'. We had to stan' up an eider beat or git beat.

I wus married in 1872 to Catharine, my wife. At our weddin' we had plenty to eat. There wus possums, wine, cake, an' plenty o' fruits. I had on a black suit, black shoes, white tie an' shirt. Catharine had on all white. I stay' wood Catherine people for a year 'til I wus able to buil' on my lan'. I am a fadder of nineteen chillun; ten boys an' nine gals; only two now livin'.

Lias Winning wusn' a mean man. He couldn' lick pa cuz dey grow up togedder or at least he didn' try. But he liked his woman slave. One day ma wus in de field workin' alone an' he went there an' try to rape 'er. Ma pull his ears almos' off so he let 'er off an' gone an' tell pa he better talk to ma. Pa was workin' in the salt pen an' w'en Mr. Winning tell him he jus' laugh cus e know why ma did it.

Dere wus a fambly doctor on de plantation name James Hibbins. My eye use to run water a lot an' he take out my eye an' couldn' put it back in, dats why I am blin' now. He ax ma an' pa not to say anything 'bout it cus he'd lost his job an' hab his license take 'way. So ma an' pa even didn' say anything even to Mr. Winning as to the truth of my blin'ness.

I wus by the "nigger quarters" one day w'en Blake, the overseer start to lick a slave. She take the whip from him an' close de door an' give him a snake beatin'.

Our boss had 'bout shree hund'ed acres o' lan' an' ober a hund'ed slaves. De overseer never wake de slaves. Dey could go in the fiel' any time in the mornin' cus ebery body was given their tas' work on Monday Mornin'. No body neber work w'en it rain or cole. Nuttin' make Lias Winning so mad as w'en one would steal; it make him morocious. Any one he catch stealin' wus sure to git a good whippin'. He didn' like for any one to fight eider.

Dey tell me wat w'en slaves wus shipped to New Orleans day had to be dress-up in nice clothes. My pa could read an' write cus he live' in the city here. His missus teach him.

Isaac Wigfall run 'way an' went to Florida an' meet a white man on a horse with a gun. He ax de man for a piece o' tobacco. The man give him de gun to hole while he git the tobacco for him. Isaac take the gun an' point it at the man an' ax 'im, "you know wha' in dis gun?" De man get frighten' an' he tell de man "you better be gone or I'll empty it in you." The man gone an' come back wood a group o' men an' houndogs. He's jus' make it to de river 'fore the dogs catch him. He had a piece o' light-wood knot an' ebery time a dog git near he hit um on de neck an' kill' all o' them. The men went back to git more help an' dogs but w'en dey git back Isaac wus gone.

Dere wus a collude church fifteen miles from Mt. Pleasant w'ere we went to service. De preacher wus name' John Henry Doe. I use to like to sing dis songs

Run away, run away

Run away, run away

Sojus of the cross.

CHORUS

Hole on, hole on

Hole on, hole on

Hole on, hole on

Hole on, sojus of the cross.

Ma too use to sing dat song.

Dere use to be dances almos' ebery week an' the older boys an' gals walk twelve miles dis to be dere. Some time there wus a tamberine beater, some time dey use' ole wash tub an beat it wood sticks, an' some time dey jus' clap their han's. W'en any one die dey wus bury in the mornin' or early afternoon.

I always play wood ghost cus I wus bo'n with a "call". I kin see the ghost jus' is plain is ebber. Some time I see some I know an' again others I don' know. Only thing you can' see their feet cus dey walk off de ground. When I use to see dem my sister would put sand on de fire den dey would go an' I wouldn' see any for a long time. One mornin' my uncle wus passin' a church an' a ghost appear' on the porch. My uncle had a dog wood 'im. He start to run an' the dog start to run too, an' down the road dey went. He didn' hab on anything but his shirt an' he say he run so fas' 'til the wind had his shirt-tail stif as a board. He couldn' out run the dog, nor could the dog out run 'im.

Dis is a spiritual dey use to sing durin' slavery:

Climb up de walls of Zion

Ah, Lord,

Climb up de walls of Zion

Ah, Lord,

Climbin' up de walls of Zion

Ah, Lord,

Climbin' up de walls of Zion

Ah, Lord,

Great camp meetin' in the promise lan'.

My pa use to sing dis song:

See w'en 'e rise

Rise an' gone,

See w'en 'e rise

Gone to Galilee on a Sunday Morning.

Oh, my Jesus rise an' gone to Galilee

On a Sunday Morning.

We use to sing dis in expetience meetin's:

Go round, go round

Look at the mornin' stay,

Go round, go round

Got a soul to save.

Dey use to sing dis too:

Room Enough, room enough
Room Enough, room enough
Room enough in de Heaven I know,
I can't stay away,
Room enough in de Heaven I know,
I can't stay away.

SOURCE:

Interview with Thomas Goodwater, 108 Anson Street.

P.S. The variations of words and sentences describe interviews with individuals, naturally.