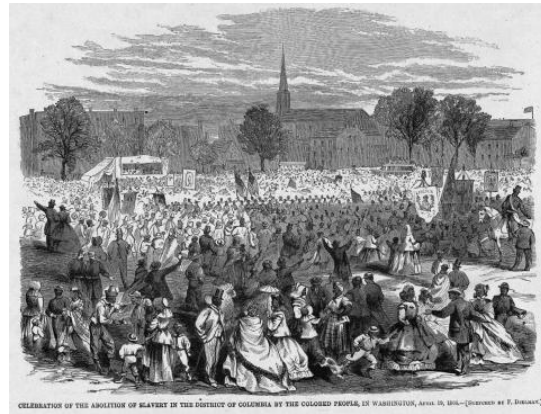


0. LAST FREE LABOR - Story Preface
1. SLAVES IN THE NEW WORLD
2. KIDNAPPED AFRICANS
3. PASSAGE TO THE NEW WORLD
4. FREEDOM - BUT NOT FOR SLAVES
5. POWERS OF THE MIND
6. REBELLION
7. ESCAPE
8. TRIPS ON THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD
9. TRICKS AND DETERMINATION
10. FUGITIVE SLAVE LAWS
11. PUNISHMENT for HELPING RUNAWAYS
12. FORMER SLAVES BECOME ABOLITIONISTS
13. BUYING AND SELLING PEOPLE
14. A TERRIBLE TIME
15. PLANTATION LIFE
16. SPLIT-UP FAMILIES
- 17. LAST FREE LABOR**
18. WHAT WAS IT LIKE?
19. HUMAN SPIRIT PREVAILS



Harper's Weekly published this illustration in its May 12, 1866 issue. It depicts a gathering of emancipated slaves. Its caption tells us more: "Celebration of the Abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia by the Colored People, in Washington, April 19, 1866." Washington itself was once a significant slave-trading city. Image online, courtesy Library of Congress. PD

When the Civil War was over, the slaves were free. Some, like Sarah Graves, had fifty cents and no education. Despite incredible obstacles, she worked hard and bought a farm. In 1937, she owned 120 acres.

Some plantation owners did not tell slaves about their freedom. Slave holders wanted that last free crop. Temple Cummins remembers the day she left the plantation:

When freedom was 'clared, marster wouldn't tell 'em, but mother she hear him tellin' mistus that the slaves was free but they didn't know it and he's not gwineter tell 'em till he makes another crop or two. When mother hear that she say she slip out the chimney corner and crack her heels together four times and shouts, "I's free, I's free."

Then she runs to the field, 'gainst marster's will and tol' all the other slaves and they quit work. Then she run away and in the night she slip into a big ravine near the house and have them bring me to her. Marster, he come out with his gun and shot at mother but she run down the ravine and gits away with me.

And so it was with many other newly freed people.

Some former slaves recalled that Southern children disagreed with their parents over slavery. William Moore's story draws a significant contrast between the plantation-owning generations:

Marse Tom been dead long time now. I 'lieve he's in hell. Seem like that where he 'long. He was a terrible mean man and a indiffent, mean wife. But he had the fines', sweetes' chillun the Lawd ever let live and breathe on this earth. They's so kind and sorrowin' over us slaves.

Some them chillun used to read us li'l things out of papers and books. We'd look at them papers and books like they somethin' mighty curious, but we better not let Marse Tom or his wife know it!

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/LAST-FREE-LABOR-Slave-Voices>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/LAST-FREE-LABOR-Slave-Voices>

Media Stream



Tempie Cummins - Former Slave

Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

PD

View this asset at:

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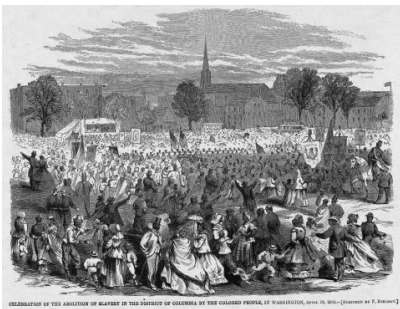
William Moore - Former Slave

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

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