ANNA MARIA COFFEE, Ex-slave, age about 89. http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/resources/wpa.html

"I was born in North Carolina, near Ensfiel '. I was er pretty big girl

when de war started. But I don’t known my real age, ‘cause every time

I was sold they made my age jes' what they wanted it. I judge, I

must a been about twelve or fourteen years ole when de war started."

"I was sold on de block more'n once, and I was owned by eleven different owners. I was sold from my mother and father when I was just such

er little tot that I can’t hardly member them at all. My father was named

James Arbor, and my mother she was Abbie Freeman."

"I remember bein' sold to old Jordan White, David Gregory, en David

Gregory, Jr., John Freeman, David Teller, Bradley Pickford, Ned Pickford,

Kinglin' Powells, en Thomas Hurt, was my last owner."

"Ned Pickford stole me from Bradley Pickford, and sold me to Kinglin'

Powells, down in Warsaw, South Carolina. Kinglin' Powells took me and

fourteen other slaves to Richmond, Virginia. Us left Warsaw one night

on de train, and when mornin' come us was crossing the James River, goin'

into Richmond. That old James River was sure muddy that mornin'. They

took us to the Trader jail, and give us something to eat, and a change o' clothes."

"That Trader Jail was sure a big place. Us set round all day, en

when night come, was put in rooms up stairs; de womans and girls all on

one side, and the men and boys on de other side along narrow hall. Them

sho' was sad times. All us knowed it was goin’ to be de last time us folks would

be together, en mos' likely, none us never see our folks no more.

Every once er while, the keeper comes through to keep em from talkin'

and plannin'."

"Sale day come. De market place was about a city block big, with

seats fixed round like a race track. All the boys and men was fixed on

one side; de big ones first, en so on, down to the little ones. De womans

en girls the was fixed the same way on the other side de market."

"I was put on de block en sold for $900.00, to Thomas Hurt. He

bought three brothers together, so's they won’t be sep'rated, and he paid

$1500.00 for the three.

WILLIAM EMMONS: Ex-slave, age 93. http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/resources/wpa.html

"Why, I seen slave traders buy up 'womens an' men for the purpose of breedin' them just' like animals, an' they'd beat them if they didn't

do what they expected of them. The slave traders wanted strong children for

work hands, an' they all time figurin' to get a strong '-ooman to carry

out the plans for raisin' children what would sell real good. They'd keep em

an' feed em for a few years, and then sell em off to de highest bidder.

No decency in such folks as them. Slavery was worse than most people

kin 'magine."

"The darkie traders use to travel all over the country, sometimes

an' buy up slaves from plantation owners who was most ready to go down

in debt. I seen men chained together, an' 'oomans bein' carried in wagons with they babies. Jes' takin' em to market for sale like cattle."

SARAH FRANCES SHAW GRAVES, AGED 87 <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>

“My name is Sarah Frances Shaw Graves, or Aunt Sally as everybody calls me. Yes’m that’s a lot of name an’ I come by…”

“Yes’m. Alotted? Yes’m. I’m goin’ to explain that,” she replied. “You see there was slave traders in those days, jes’ like you got horse and mule an’ auto traders now. They bought and sold slaves and hired ‘em out. Yes’m, rented ‘em out. Allotted means somethin’ like hired out. But the slave never got no wages. That all went to the master. The man they was allotted to paid the master.”

“Allotments made a lot of grief for the slaves”, Aunt Sally asserted. “We left my papa in Kentucky, ‘cause he was allotted to another man. My papa never knew where my mama went, an’ my mama never knew where my papa went.” Aunt Sally paused a moment, then went on bitterly. “They never wanted mama to know, ‘cause they knowed she would never marry so long as she knew where he was. Our master wanted her to marry again and raise more children to be slaves. They never wanted mama to know where papa was, an’ she never did”, sighed Aunt Sally.

“Yes’m. Some masters was good and some was bad. My mama’s master whipped his slaves for pastime. My master was not so bad as some was to their slaves. I’ve had many a whippin’, some I deserved, an’ some I got for being blamed for doin’ things the master’s children did. My master whipped his slaves with a cat-o-nine tails. He’d say to me, ‘You ain’t had a currin’ down for some time. Come here!!!’ then he whipped me with the cat. The cat was made of nine strips of leather fastened onto the end of a whip. Lots of times when he hit me, the cat left nine stripes of blood on my back. Yes ma’am.”

“Yes’m. I worked in the fields, and I worked hard too. Plantin’ and harvestin’ in those days was really work. The used oxen to break up the ground for corn, an’ for plowin’ it too. They hoed corn with a hoe, and cut the stalks with a hoe and shocked (*shucked*-nps) ‘em. They cut the grain with the cradle and bound it with their hands and shocked it. They threshed the grain with a hickory stick. Beating it out.

“I carried water for the field hands. I’ve carried three big buckets of water from one field to another, from one place to another, one in each hand and one balanced on my head.”

TEMPLE CUMMINS, AGE UNKNOWN

“I slep’ on a pallet on the floor. They gave me a homespun dress onct a year at Christmas time. When company come I had to run and slip on that dress. At other times I wore white chillens’ cast-off clothes so wore they was ready to throw away. I had to pin them up with red horse thorns to hide my nakedness, My dress was usually split from hem to neck and I had to wear them until they was strings. Went barefoot summer and winter till the feets crack open.

“I never seed my grandparents ‘cause my mother she sold in Alabama when she’s 17 and they brung her to Texas and treat her rough. At mealtime they hand me a piece of cornbread and tell me ‘Run ‘long.’ Sometime I git a little piece of meat and biscuit, ‘bout onct a month. I gathered up scraps the white chillens lef’.