

University of Pardubice
Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

Childhood in Slavery as Depicted in Selected Slave Narratives

Dominika Láníková

Bachelor Thesis

2019

Univerzita Pardubice
Fakulta filozofická
Akademický rok: 2016/2017

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Dominika Láníková**
Osobní číslo: **H15315**
Studijní program: **B7507 Specializace v pedagogice**
Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk - specializace v pedagogice**
Název tématu: **Dětství v otroctví ve vybraných vyprávěních otroků**
Zadávající katedra: **Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky**

Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Závěrečná bakalářská práce na pomezí literatury a kulturních studií se zaměří na problematiku amerického otroctví, konkrétně na životy otroků, jak jsou zachyceny ve vyprávěních (uprchlých) otroků, tzv. slave narratives.

Studentka s použitím relevantní sekundární literatury nejprve v úvodu práce nastíní historický kontext otroctví v US, dále vysvětlí pojem slave narrative a stručně představí autory/vyprávění, jež si pro svou práci zvolila.

Jádrem práce pak bude analýza vybraných slave narratives vzniklých v období 1750-1870, v níž se studentka zaměří na obraz dětství a rodinného života a rodinných vztahů otroků. Své vývody bude vhodně ilustrovat primárními texty a konzultovat se sekundárními zdroji.

Závěrem své analýzy přehledně shrne a zhodnotí zvolené texty ze zkoumaného hlediska porovná a pokusí se vyslovit obecnější závěry o životních osudech amerických (uprchlých) otroků.

Rozsah grafických prací:

Rozsah pracovní zprávy:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná**

Jazyk zpracování bakalářské práce: **Angličtina**

Seznam odborné literatury: **viz příloha**

Vedoucí bakalářské práce:

doc. Šárka Bubíková, Ph.D.


Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Datum zadání bakalářské práce: **1. května 2017**

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: **31. března 2018**



prof. PhDr. Karel Rýdl, CSc.
děkan



Mgr. Olga Roebuck, Ph.D.
vedoucí katedry

V Pardubicích dne 30. října 2017

Příloha zadání bakalářské práce

Seznam odborné literatury:

- Alston, Lester. "Children as Chattel." In *Small World: Children and Adolescents in America, 1850-1950*. Edited by Elliott West and Paula Petrik, 208-231. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1992.
- Blassingame, John W. *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Brown, John. *Slave Life in Georgia: A Narrative of the Life, Sufferings, and Escape of John Brown, a Fugitive Slave, Now in England*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2001.
<https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/jbrown/jbrown.html>
- Bubíková, Šárka. "We Were But Property - Not a Mother, and the Children God Had Given Her:" The Figure of a Child in Abolitionist Literature. *American and British Studies Annual* 7 (2014): 38-47.
- Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American slave*. New York: Penguin Books, 1982.
- Gutman, Herbert. *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1976.
- Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. New York: Norton, 2001.
- King, Vilma. *Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth-Century America*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997.
- Schneider, Dorothy, and Carl J. Schneider. *Slavery in America*. New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007.
- Shaw, Charles E. *A Different Perspective: Slavery and It's Affect on the African-American Way of life in America*. USA: Xlibris Corporation, 2007.
- Wiggins, David K. "The Play of Slave Children in the Plantation Communities of the Old South, 1820-1860." In *Growing Up in America: Children in Historical Perspective*. Edited by Ray N. Hiner and Joseph M. Hawes, 173-190. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985.

Prohlašuji:

Tuto práci jsem vypracovala samostatně. Veškeré literární prameny a informace, které jsem v práci využila, jsou uvedeny v seznamu použité literatury.

Byla jsem seznámena s tím, že se na moji práci vztahují práva a povinnosti vyplývající ze zákona č. 121/2000 Sb., autorský zákon, zejména se skutečností, že Univerzita Pardubice má právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití této práce jako školního díla podle § 60 odst. 1 autorského zákona, a s tím, že pokud dojde k užití této práce mnou nebo bude poskytnuta licence o užití jinému subjektu, je Univerzita Pardubice oprávněna ode mne požadovat přiměřený příspěvek na úhradu nákladů, které na vytvoření díla vynaložila, a to podle okolností až do jejich skutečné výše.

Beru na vědomí, že v souladu s § 47b zákona č. 111/1998 Sb., o vysokých školách a o změně a doplnění dalších zákonů (zákon o vysokých školách), ve znění pozdějších předpisů, a směrnicí Univerzity Pardubice č. 9/2012, bude práce zveřejněna v Univerzitní knihovně a prostřednictvím Digitální knihovny Univerzity Pardubice.

V Pardubicích dne 24.3.2019

Dominika Láníková

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor doc. Mgr. Šárka Bubíková, Ph.D. for her valuable advice and guidance during the process of writing of this bachelor thesis. I would also like to thank my family for their support and encouragement.

ANNOTATION

This bachelor thesis is analysing childhood of Afro-American children who were living in slavery during the 18th and 19th century. This thesis focuses on issues that influenced their lives from the very beginning such as marriages of parents, pregnancy and birth of slave babies, the growth of children, separation of black families, and realisation of child's slave status. Furthermore, it also examines housing, diet, clothing, education, leisure time, and early labour duties of children. To illustrate various ideas and experience of former slaves and to support them, three slave narratives were chosen for this thesis, namely Frederick Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*; Harriet A. Jacobs' *Incidents in a Life of a Slave Girl* and John Brown's *Slave Life in Georgia: A Narrative of the Life, Sufferings, and Escape of John Brown, a Fugitive Slave, Now in England* together with selected resources of scholarly literature.

KEY WORDS

Afro-Americans, slavery, freedom, slave narratives, childhood

ANOTACE

Tato bakalářská práce popisuje dětství afroamerických dětí, které žily v otroctví během 18. a 19. století. Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na problémy, které ovlivňovaly životy dětí už od jejich samotného počátku jako například manželství rodičů, těhotenství a porod otrokářských dětí, růst dětí, rozdělení černošských rodin a uvědomění si svého otrokářského postavení. Dále se tato práce také zabývá bydlením, stravou oblečením, vzděláním, volným časem a časnými pracovními povinnostmi. K ilustraci rozmanitých myšlenek a zkušeností bývalých otroků a k podpoření těchto skutečností byly pro tuto práci vybrána tři vyprávění bývalých otroků *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* od Frederick Douglass, *Incidents in a Life of a Slave Girl* od Harriet A. Jacobs a *Slave Life in Georgia: A Narrative of the Life, Sufferings, and Escape of John Brown, a Fugitive Slave, Now in England* od John Brown společně s vybranými zdroji odborné literatury.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Afroameričané, otroctví, svoboda, vyprávění otroků, dětství

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	9
1. CHILDHOOD IN SLAVERY	15
1.1. Slave marriages	15
1.2. Birth of a slave.....	17
1.3. Naming a slave child.....	21
1.4. Growing up	23
1.5. Separation	24
1.6. The realisation.....	27
2. ASPECTS OF A LIFE IN SLAVERY	28
2.1. Housing	28
2.2. Diet	31
2.3. Clothing	34
2.4. Leisure time.....	36
2.5. Early Labour Duties of Slave Children	39
2.6. Education	42
3. CONCLUSION	46
4. RESUMÉ.....	48
5. BIBLIOGRAPHY	52

INTRODUCTION

Slavery – a system of treating people like property, would be now seen in most of our eyes as unacceptable but it was practised throughout the past in various parts of the world. Slavery, which influenced the economy, history and both the traders and the ones who were traded, had its roots in America in the 16th century. At that time, indentured servants were sent to colonies for a few years from Britain to cultivate the tobacco crops. These servants were white, were not treated as property and after their contract expired, they were free.¹

In the 17th century, the interest in the indentured servants decreased, however during the second half of the 17th century, the trade with black servants began to seem like a more lucrative and profitable business. England came to realise that it would cause fewer troubles to exchange white servants for Afro-Americans.² Therefore, it can be said that the use of slaves was a choice among other alternatives, but the plantation owners decided to choose Africans as they usually claimed that Negroes had to be brought to the South to perform work that Europeans cannot.³ Continuously, the work on the plantations became a synonym for slave labour.

The slavery system was created little by little, step by step, and during the 18th and 19th century it reached its specific form. That was the time of economic growth and prosperity.⁴ It did not matter, to which exact colony were slaves supposed to be exported, their journey always began in the same way. European traders had two ways to obtain them – they could either get slaves from their colonies in Africa or they would sail along the coast of Africa and try to buy some of the inhabitants until their ship was full. They used cloth, weapons, alcohol or silver coins to pay for the Africans.⁵

From then on, slaves lost everything that was ever since part of their life – their name, language, religion and sometimes even contact with relatives while they were exported to America. When the ship reached a colony, they were usually auctioned at sales by local buyers and when an African was sold he became a property of the given master. Cost of one slave

¹ Markéta Křížová, *Otroctví v Novém světě od 15. do 19. století* (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2013), 109.

² John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*, 7th edition (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 32.

³ Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), 7.

⁴ Wilma A. Dunaway, *The African-American Family in Slavery and Emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 19.

⁵ Křížová, *Otroctví v Novém světě*, 132.

could have been high, but within one year any slave would usually repay his cost back, and after a few years, he would become profitable.⁶

Tobacco was not the only crop that was cultivated in the southern colonies. Indigo, rice and cotton were cultivated on the plantations as well, and so high was the demand for these crops during the 18th and 19th century that the farmers had to increase their productivity. More laborers were needed, and thus the population grew. At those times, the southern colonies were usually populated by 70% of Africans.⁷

Even though slavery was restricted after the American Revolution, it did not mean the end of slavery and the South still remained the backbone of the economy. When the Industrial Revolution started in Europe, the demand for cotton was high, therefore the southern plantation owners needed even more field hands. Although it was illegal to export Africans to America, many traders did it despite their high price, but it was not the only option how to increase Afro-American population. Masters also used various strategies to promote women's reproduction as they believed that "a woman that every two years give a birth to a child is economically more beneficial than any other strong man".⁸

Ever since the position and life of any slave were uncertain. They were treated as a property belonging to the owner and barely had any rights. They were unable to participate in any political decision making, vote or get married without the permission of the owner. The power of every owner was absolute, and many slaves were facing fear during their life, were physically and psychically abused, punished, separated from their family or even killed if the owner decided so. None of them was free, neither their children, unless they managed to escape to the North. Several laws were passed to make Afro-Americans powerless to make sure that they would not rebel against the system and would be submissive to owners.⁹

As mentioned before, slaves were not legally free, but things changed in December 1865 when The Proclamation of Emancipation came into effect as the result of the Civil War between the urban North and the rural South. The Thirteenth Amendment was ratified, and slaves were freed¹⁰ as declared:

⁶ Křížová, *Otroctví v Novém světě*, 137.

⁷ Dunaway, *The African-American Family in Slavery*, 19.

⁸ Křížová, *Otroctví v Novém světě*, 243.

⁹ Mary Beth Norton, David M. Katzman, Paul D. Escott, Howard P. Chudacoff, Thomas G. Paterson, William M. Tuttle Jr., *A people and a Nation: History of the United States* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1986), 306.

¹⁰ "Slave Narrative," Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed January 29, 2019, <https://academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/slave-narrative/68166>.

all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.¹¹

The period before the Civil War, the 1st half of the 19th century, was characterised by the antislavery movement in Europe and North America. Enlightenment thinkers began to criticise slavery for its brutality and inhumanity. Across the North were established abolitionist organisations whose aim was to inform the public about the brutal effects of slavery and made people think that something should be done against this peculiar institution.¹²

It was a time when so-called antebellum slave narratives were published and successively sold. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, slave narratives can be considered as controversial writings either autobiographical or fictional. They present a major part of the life of a former slave either written by himself or orally presented.¹³ These narratives played an important role in the anti-slavery movement as they were aiming at informing the readers about the lives of slaves – what was it like to be one, what were their labour duties, where they lived, what the slave auctions looked like, or for what reasons were they punished. Moreover, their aim during the 19th century was also to make the readers feel sentimental, make them stand up and do something against this institution.¹⁴

Not every slave was educated since the education was restricted for Negroes as stated by Frederick Douglass:

If you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell. A nigger should know nothing but to obey his master—to do as he is told to do. Learning would spoil the best nigger in the world. Now, if you teach that nigger (speaking of myself) how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave. He would at once become unmanageable, and of no value to his master. As to himself, it could do him no good, but a great deal of harm. It would make him discontented and unhappy.¹⁵

Therefore, only a few slaves were literate whereas the rest of them who managed to escape from the South were unable to read and write. In such a case, they had to dictate their reports orally to white writers or editors who would afterwards write these reports down and

¹¹ “Transcript of the Proclamation,” National Archives, accessed January 29, 2019, <https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured-documents/emancipation-proclamation/transcript.html>.

¹² “Slave Narrative.”

¹³ “Slave Narrative.”

¹⁴ Stephen T. Butterfield. “The Use of language in the Slaves Narratives,” *Negro American Literature Forum*, Vol 6. No. 3 (Autumn, 1972): 72–78.

¹⁵ Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American slave* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), 78.

provide the former slave with stylistic changes, useful metaphors and give the text shape and meaning.¹⁶

As Olney claims, these narratives have a great number of features in common including any or all the following: portrait or photograph of the narrative; testimonials; sermons; poems; illustrations; sentimental style; a variety of documents such as letters, bills of slaves, notices of auctions and escaped slaves, certificates of marriage, birth and death.¹⁷

Furthermore, these writings also share many typical features for their outlines. For example, a title page frequently consists of a claim “Written by Himself”, or of any other alternative close to the meaning. This claim would also be a part of the title, followed by preface or introduction written either by the narrator or white abolitionist. Portrait of the author can be found in the book as well as it is an important part. It is introducing, identifying or signalling the presence of a narrator in the text. The portraits are also trying to persuade the reader about the autobiographical objectives of the slave narratives as life writings.¹⁸

Next, the actual narrative would usually begin the introduction with the phrase “I was born ...”. Like the portrait, this phrase was important to the slave narrators as they wanted to emphasise their real existence. What would usually follow, is the fact that the narrator knew a very little about his parentage and birth as can be seen in the following examples:

I was born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough, and about twelve miles from Easton, in Talbot county, Maryland. I have no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen any authentic record containing it. By far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their ages as horses know of theirs, and it is the wish of most masters within my knowledge to keep their slaves thus ignorant. I do not remember to have ever met a slave who could tell of his birthday.¹⁹

I was born a slave; but I never knew it till six years of happy childhood had passed away.²⁰

The narrator would go on to describe a cruel master, overseer or mistress. Would not leave out details of his first observation of whipping, whipping of women, him being whipped or of a slave denying being whipped. The realisation of him being a slave would follow as a turning point of his life. The narrator would present all the barriers and difficulties he had to encounter while learning to read and write. Brief reports of food, cloth, the patten of a day, week

¹⁶ “Autobiography: Slave narratives,” Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature, accessed January 29, 2019, <http://oxfordre.com/literature/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.001.0001/acrefore-9780190201098-e-658>.

¹⁷ James Olney. ““I Was Born”: Slave Narratives, Their Status as Autobiography and as Literature.” *Callaloo*, No. 20 (Winter, 1984): 46–73.

¹⁸ Lynn A. Casmier-Paz. “Slave Narratives and the Rhetoric of Author Portaiture.” *New Literary History*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Winter, 2003): 91–116.

¹⁹ Douglass, *Narrative of the Life*, 47.

²⁰ Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (New York: Norton, 2001), 9.

or year would be included as well. He would also describe details about slave auctions, separations and destruction of slave families. Finally, the narrator would report failed attempts of different slaves to escape and a detailed description of his successful attempt to escape. At the end of the story, the former slave would usually change his last name and would end up his story with reflections on slavery.²¹

Though slave narrators shared in their stories various similarities, considering their gender, few differences could be noticed as men and women experienced slavery in different ways. According to Morgan, if a narrative was written by man, he would emphasise his hunger for literacy for the reason that male authors viewed education as a way to escape slavery and be free. He would depict scenes full of effort to learn to read and write. He would also not forget to mention all the obstacles he had to overcome while becoming literate. Furthermore, male narrators also felt a need to stress their individuality and ability to stand alone.²²

In contrast, such a conclusion does not apply to narratives written by women. Women would emphasise the importance of relationships. This is due to the fact that during slavery, Afro-American women had to depend on one another to survive. Thus, women would organise narratives around relationships that were meaningful for them, they would sustain these relationships, and show tendencies to make decisions based on relationships. Unlike males, females did not feel that they had to prove themselves but generally reported themselves as a part of the community.²³

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to depict and analyse childhood of slaves during the 18th and 19th century in the Antebellum South. The thesis focuses on the aspects of slave childhood and provides with different experiences of both female and male narrators. Firstly, Frederick Douglass and his *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* was chosen. Douglass was a leader in the abolitionist movement and his autobiography published in 1845 describes the time when he was living as slave in Maryland.²⁴ Secondly, Harriet A. Jacobs' autobiography *Incidents in a Life of a Slave Girl* firstly published under the pseudonym Linda Brent which focuses on sexual abuse of women.²⁵ And lastly, John Brown's *Slave Life*

²¹ Olney, "I Was Born", 46–73.

²² Winifred Morgan. "Gender-Related Differences in the Slave Narratives of Harriet Jacobs and Frederick Douglass." *American Studies* 35, no. 2 (1994): 73–94.

²³ Morgan, "Gender-Related Differences", 73–94.

²⁴ "Frederick Douglass," History, accessed February 9, 2019, <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/frederick-douglass>.

²⁵ "Harriet Jacobs," NCPedia, accessed February 9, 2019, <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/jacobs-harriet>.

in Georgia: A Narrative of the Life, Sufferings, and Escape of John Brown, a Fugitive Slave, Now in England. These three writings were chosen as primary resources to support the research.

The analytical part of the thesis consists of two chapters. The first chapter named *Childhood in Slavery* examines the beginning of a slave life. This chapter is devoted to slave marriages, the birth of a baby, the process of naming a child and his growth. Furthermore, it also concerns the separations of slave families and child's first realisation of him being a slave.

The second chapter named *Aspects of a Life in Slavery* examines housing, diet, and clothing. It is also dedicated to early children's duties, leisure time and overwhelming difficulties they had to overcome while trying to become literate.

1. CHILDHOOD IN SLAVERY

1.1. Slave marriages

Due to the ownership of a slave by master and treating him as property, all aspects of any slave's life were different compared to those of white people. Hence even the marriages of slaves were different. The reason behind this was that from any master's economic point of view, marriage was a powerful tool which helped them to increase profit. Masters used different strategies to either increase their profit, or to gain slaves, and marriage was one of them. Enabling slaves to form family units offered them economic advantages.

As Dunaway claims, when slaves formed family units, the costs of diet, food and shelter were reduced. By being allowed to get married, slaves built strong family attachments, and therefore the threat that any member of a family would run away was reduced. Furthermore, when masters allowed slaves to get married, they could hope for the slave population to increase.²⁶ For that reason, many women were forced to get married very young to reproduce as soon as possible.

Afro-Americans could get married, but several restrictions had to be considered. Firstly, when a slave woman and man wanted to get married, they had to ask master to obtain permission. On condition that they belonged to different masters, both masters had to agree with the wedding. Secondly, slave marriages were never legally registered, and therefore marriage did not ensure the husband any legal rights if he and his wife had children. And lastly, marriages of free black males and slave women were forbidden in most cases.²⁷

Stevenson mentions that some couples had to obtain permission from either parents or other black authority first and only after that they could ask the owner. She adds that even though males, both slaves and owners, were seen as the ones who had more power considering the wedding permission, slave females were more influential for young girls. Ever since women depended on one another to survive, thus there is no wonder that their advice, ideas, and opinions were more influential for young women than opinions of men.²⁸

Apart from forbidding females to marry a free black male, many slaves were also forbidden to marry a slave who belonged to a different owner. Slaveholders always tried to strictly regulate the lives of laborers, hence marrying someone living far away from home was unacceptable. It was because they could not have control over such relationships and had to

²⁶ Dunaway, *The African-American Family in Slavery*, 117.

²⁷ Dunaway, *The African-American Family in Slavery*, 67.

²⁸ Brenda E. Stevenson, *Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 227.

face the danger of their slaves running away. Exceptionally, if a slave wanted to marry someone who belonged to a different owner, a sale was made to unite them.²⁹ Nevertheless, this was not common.

Jacobs experienced a situation when her mistress was being informed by another slave girl that she would like to get married. Unfortunately, the mistress was of the opinion that slaves have no right to get married as she replied to the request: "I will have you peeled and pickled, my lady," said she, "if I ever hear you mention that subject again. Do you suppose that I will have you tending my children with the children of that nigger?"³⁰

Jacobs herself faced a similar situation when she fell in love with a free black male who wanted to marry her despite the slave status. He even offered her to buy her and thus make her free. Nevertheless, she was not allowed to marry him as her master, Dr. Flint, was unwilling to give her the permission: "Well, I'll soon convince you whether I am your master, or the nigger fellow you honor so highly. If you must have a husband, you may take up with one of my slaves."³¹

Moreover, having feelings for a free black male and choosing a husband of her own choice was absolutely unacceptable behaviour for Dr. Flint, thus he wanted to punish her for it. He did not allow Jacobs to marry him because he wanted her for himself. Hence, he forbade her to see him or even talk to him anymore by saying:

Never let me hear that fellow's name mentioned again. If I ever know of your speaking to him, I will cowhide you both; and if I catch him lurking about my premises, I will shoot him as soon as I would a dog. Do you hear what I say?³²

She was also aware of the fact that if she would marry him, nothing would legally change. She would still be a property of Dr. Flint, and if she had children with this man, they would belong to her master as well:

Even if he could have obtained permission to marry me while I was a slave, the marriage would give him no power to protect me from my master. It would have made him miserable to witness the insults I should have been subjected to. And then, if we had children, I knew they must "follow the condition of the mother." What a terrible blight that would be on the heart of a free, intelligent father!³³

Masters were powerful since they had the final say regarding marriages of slaves, choice of partners, or when and where married couples could see each other. They decided whether husband and wife could live and work together, how many children they could have as well as

²⁹ Stampp, *Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South*, 341.

³⁰ Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, 34.

³¹ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 34.

³² Jacobs, *Incidents*, 35.

³³ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 37.

what would happen to them in future.³⁴ Furthermore, they played a major role in slave weddings. Slaves were mostly married in informal ceremonies “by de master’s word”. Rituals and ceremonies varied from wedding to wedding but for many newly married couples, “jumping the broom” was a popular ritual. It cannot be said in general how many times a couple jumped over the broom since it differed every time, however, once they jumped, they were considered married.³⁵ Interestingly, Dunaway mentions that only one-tenth of the ceremonies were religious.³⁶

Despite the fact that slave marriages were illegal, couples took them seriously, husbands and wives built strong relationships, and their marriages often lasted more than 30 years or even longer.³⁷ Though many families were separated, fathers were working on different plantations miles away and the only day when they could see and visit families was Sunday when all slaves usually had a day off, they never forget their loved ones and tried to see them whenever it was possible.

If a slave decided to change his husband or wife, he could, but only after receiving permission from his master as some of them served as family counsellors and therefore divorce was within their jurisdiction. In the case of divorce, slaves could have been punished for their decision.³⁸

1.2. Birth of a slave

When a girl reached her teenage years, she was expected to become a mother or possibly wife as soon as possible. The age when a young girl was expected to become a mother differed from plantation to plantation, from master to master. Some were expected and forced to reproduce as soon as possible - that was usually around the 12th or 13th year of their life. Others could have been expected to have a baby by the time they were over 15.³⁹

Young women were ever since expected two things - to keep up the slave population and to maintain their present work duties.⁴⁰ Although they could become pregnant and have a baby with their husbands, masters often practised different strategies which helped them to grow the population and thus their wealth as well. They separated couples and forced women

³⁴ Stevenson, *Life in Black and White*, 226.

³⁵ Stevenson, *Life in Black and White*, 228.

³⁶ Dunaway, *The African-American Family*, 118.

³⁷ Dunaway, *The African-American Family*, 63.

³⁸ Stampp, *Slavery*, 342.

³⁹ Dunaway, *The African – American Family*, 119.

⁴⁰ Dunaway, *The African – American Family*, 77.

to have a baby with another man. Or they and their sons, sexually abused young black women. Some of them offered black women to their male guests to sleep with.⁴¹ Moreover, white men sexually abused slave women regardless of their marriage. Similar situation witnessed Douglass when he reported that his master Mr. Covey bought a new slave woman in order to enrich his wealth:

She had already given birth to one child, which proved her to be just what he wanted. After buying her, he hired a married man of Mr. Samuel Harrison, to live with him one year; and him he used to fasten up with her every night! The result was, that, at the end of the year, the miserable woman gave birth to twins. At this result Mr. Covey seemed to be highly pleased, both with the man and the wretched woman.⁴²

Brown reported situation of sexual exploitation of a married woman by master's son:

Another time John James, another of Jep's sons, and a married man, sought the wife of a slave named Abram. In order to gain access more easily to the man's cabin, he set a tree on fire, and then sent Abram to watch the fence, lest it should catch and burn down. Abram suspected John James' design upon his wife, and that this was a mere pretext to get rid of him for a while.⁴³

When Jacobs turned 15, her master, Dr. Flint, started to sexually exploit her. He started to whisper nasty words into her ears: "he told me I was his property; that I must be subject to his will in all things".⁴⁴ And continued to do his utmost to overcome all the obstacles on his way to abuse her as Jacobs notes: "My master met me at every turn, reminding me that I belonged to him, and swearing by heaven and earth that he would compel me to submit to him."⁴⁵ When she became an adult, Dr. Flint was still willing to make his plan happened. He planned to build a secret house in a hidden place where he would have sex with her. However, he did not manage to make this plan happened as she escaped his sexual exploitation by getting pregnant with Mr. Sands.⁴⁶

When a woman got pregnant, her life did not become any easier considering her working conditions. Slaveholders usually required females to work on plantations almost until the childbirth which put them at risk. They preferred to see their crops growing, being profitable rather than seeing pregnant women not having their work done.⁴⁷ Some of them were placed in

⁴¹ Dorothy Schneider and Carl J. Schneider, *Slavery in America* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007), 86.

⁴² Douglass, *Narrative of the Life*, 105.

⁴³ John Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia: A Narrative of the Life, Sufferings, and Escape of John Brown, a Fugitive Slave, Now in England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2001), 133.
<https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/jbrown/jbrown.html>.

⁴⁴ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 26.

⁴⁵ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 27.

⁴⁶ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 47–48.

⁴⁷ Marie Jenkins Schwartz, *Born in Bondage: Growing Up Enslaved in the Antebellum South* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 21.

<https://archive.org/details/borninbondagegro00schw>.

special work gangs with lighter tasks when they were in the fifth month of pregnancy, yet it differed from owner to owner and his decision.⁴⁸ Whether he allowed pregnant women to take a break and relax whenever they felt sick or let them work hard and risk a loss of the baby. Usually, they waited until the pregnancy was visible and only then excused women from hard work.⁴⁹ Moreover, mothers themselves faced a risk when they were whipped. Not only they could be harmed but their babies as well. With this in mind, family, relatives and friends of a pregnant woman tried to persuade the owner or mistress to provide the pregnant woman with better conditions.⁵⁰

However, owners were not willing to invest a lot of money into pregnant women. They did not provide them with any better housing nor clothing. Slaves were usually supplied with clothing annually with no regard for body changes.⁵¹ Thus, women had to adjust their clothing as best as they could when their body began to change.⁵² Pregnancy and childbirth were risky for Afro-American women. They knew a little about their needs, body changes, threatens, diseases, or how to check whether the pregnancy and child was healthy.⁵³ Unless they were in danger of life, masters did not call a doctor in order to save expenses. For this reason, women were likely to receive advice from family members, masters or the enslaved midwives.⁵⁴

Midwives replaced doctors when masters were unwilling to pay one and helped women to deliver a baby. Apart from midwives, mothers, fathers, family members and even masters were present at the childbirth as Schwartz notes.⁵⁵ The presence of master was different from the presence of family members. Master's presence reflected his interested in wealth and celebration of the growing slave population. Dr. Flint did not forget to often remind this to Jacobs: "These brats will bring me a handsome sum of money one of these days."⁵⁶ Presence of slaves meant that they wanted to make sure that all procedures went well, assist the mother, or celebrate the life of a newly born baby. Both masters and slaves celebrated the birth with gifts. Gifts were more common for slaves than masters. Slaves would usually give food that

⁴⁸ Schneider et al., *Slavery in America*, 84.

⁴⁹ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 30.

⁵⁰ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 24–25.

⁵¹ Dunaway, *The African-American Family*, 88.

⁵² Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 32.

⁵³ Wilma King, *Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth-Century America* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 4.

⁵⁴ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage* 33.

⁵⁵ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 19.

⁵⁶ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 66.

they grew themselves or help with the baby whereas masters would give the mother a new dress.⁵⁷

The harsh conditions women had to face at work, poor living conditions and poor nutrition were factors which contributed to complicated pregnancy and childbirth. Many babies were born premature and weighed less than five and half-pounds as Mintz claims.⁵⁸ This happened to Jacobs' first baby: "When my babe was born, they said it was premature. It weighed only four pounds; but God let it live. I heard the doctor say I could not survive till morning. I had often prayed for death; but now I did not want to die, unless my child could die too."⁵⁹

Birth of a baby could have been complicated by the fact that his father was a white man and the baby was born as a mulatto child with light skin. The reason behind this situation was sexual exploitation of women by the master, his son or any other white man. After delivering a mulatto child, no celebration of a newly born baby followed. What followed were a series of questions about the identity of the father, jealousy of mistress, and whipping either by master or mistress. Mothers of a mulatto child kept the information about the father for themselves as it was safe for both the mother and the child.⁶⁰

Douglass was born as a child whose father was probably a white man as he wrote in his narrative: "My father was a white man. He was admitted to be such by all I ever heard speak of my parentage. The opinion was also whispered that my master was my father; but of the correctness of this opinion, I know nothing; the means of knowing was withheld from me".⁶¹

It did not matter whether a baby's father was a black man or a white man. Whether his parents belonged to one master or both belonged to different ones. Or whether he was born black, mulatto, or almost white. In all cases as soon as he was born, he became the property of mother's master. As declared by a law passed by Virginia Assembler in 1662: "All children born in this country shall be held blond or free only according to the condition of mother."⁶² Thus, it guaranteed the owner prosperity in terms of a long-life profit. After childbirth, slave mothers were usually given thirty days to recover and then they were expected to return to work duties, leaving their children alone.

⁵⁷ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 20.

⁵⁸ Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* (The United States of America: Belknap Press, 2006), 96.

https://archive.org/details/hucksraifthistory00mint_0.

⁵⁹ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 52.

⁶⁰ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 44–45.

⁶¹ Douglass, *Narrative of Life* 48.

⁶² King, *Stolen Childhood*, 6.

1.3. Naming a slave child

After a baby was born, mothers usually waited for a few days until they were sure that the baby is healthy and able to survive. Only then they decided to name him. Such an attitude towards naming an African-American baby was due to an old African custom. This custom expected African mother to give birth to a child and spent at least six days lying in bed with the baby. When the six days passed, mother bathed the baby for the first time and named him. The name was often selected by father through the communication with spirits.⁶³

As long as the baby survived the first few days, the baby could be named. This event, like the event of childbirth, was celebrated by slaves and the new-born baby was usually named in honour of close relatives. As King notes, naming slaves after relatives or ancestors was done in order to show family linkages between family members and to let the children remember the family history.⁶⁴

Furthermore, Afro-Americans could possibly name their children according to a day, month or season when they were born. Examples of such a name could be “Cudjo, Mingo, Cuffee, Phebe or Easter.”⁶⁵ Nevertheless, the meaning of a name could be unclear without proving any specific information to the given child. Like in the case of the name Phebe which was given to girls born on Friday or the name Easter given to a slave born in September.⁶⁶ As Douglass claims in his narrative, only barely slaves knew any information about their date of birth as this information was kept away from them:

I have no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen any authentic record containing it. By far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their ages as horses know of theirs, and it is the wish of most masters within my knowledge to keep their slaves thus ignorant. I do not remember to have ever met a slave who could tell of his birthday.⁶⁷

Brown reveals no accurate knowledge of his age as well:

When in Slavery, I was called Fed. Why I was so named, I cannot tell. I never knew myself by any other name, nor always by that; for it is common for slaves to answer to any name, as it may suit the humour of the master. I do not know how old I am, but think I may be any age between thirty-five and forty.⁶⁸

⁶³ Joseph E. Illick, *American Childhoods* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 38.

⁶⁴ King, *Stolen Childhood*, 7.

⁶⁵ King, *Stolen Childhood*, 7.

⁶⁶ King, *Stolen Childhood*, 7.

⁶⁷ Douglass, *Narrative of Life*, 47.

⁶⁸ Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia*, 1.

As slaves became more familiar with biblical stories and their figures, they chose names for children based on these stories and characters. But they chose only the ones which belonged to figures with favourable characters.

Slaveholders tended to involve themselves in the naming process. They wanted to give a name to their new property when they did not like the one suggested by parents. It was common especially in the case when it showed family connections owing to the fact that it was unacceptable for some owners. Or they just simply insisted on naming a child. Some owners could have changed the names of the newly bought laborers when they did not like their present names. In such occasions, it could happen that a slave had two names. One approved by the owner and the other one which was only known to other slaves.⁶⁹

When a baby was named, his name could not show any details or specification related to his father's identity. Slaves were expected to be given their master's surname which shown possession of the given master. Even though the father of Jacobs' child was a free black man she knew she would not be allowed to give her child his name: "he was not unwilling that he should bear his name; but he had no legal claim to it; and if I had bestowed it upon him, my master would have regarded it as a new crime, a new piece of insolence, and would, perhaps, revenge it on the boy".⁷⁰ Thus, Jacobs decided to name her son after her uncle and her daughter after the former mistress of Jacobs' father. In the narrative, she calls her children Benjamin and Ellen. As some owners were insisting on slaves to use their surnames, even on newly bought slaves, this led into many of them having multiple surnames identifying ownership of various masters.⁷¹

When slaves managed to be free, they had a tendency to change their names and surnames. They did it because they could not relate with their present one, they felt unsafe from their owners or because they wanted the surname to be related to their personality rather than to a person who used to own them. While Brown was trying to escape, he changed his name to John Brown to travel safely.⁷² Douglass was originally named "Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey" nevertheless when he escaped, he changed his name several times because he did not like having two middle names. Finally, he asked Mr. Johnson to choose a name for him on the condition that he would keep the name "Frederick" as it was part of his identity. Mr.

⁶⁹ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 169.

⁷⁰ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 53.

⁷¹ Dunaway, *The African-American Family*, 65.

⁷² Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia* 149–150.

Johnson proposed him name “Douglass”, and from then on, he was called “Frederick Douglass”.⁷³

1.4. Growing up

As soon as slave children were born, they required care from mothers. Notwithstanding the fact that mothers were excused from work for some time after the childbirth, it did not actually take long, and they were expected to return to the duties as soon as possible. Masters were aware of the fact that infants needed some attention and care to grow up in order to survive. However, they preferred women to take care of crops rather than infants. So even though mothers could not take care of the little ones all day, they knew that they had to be at least attentive in terms of breastfeeding to provide infants with enough nutrition for their growth. The longer the breastfeeding lasted, the healthier the child was.⁷⁴

Regardless of their work duties, mothers always tried to find time to wean babies. Unfortunately, not all masters liked to see them taking breaks from work and running home to feed children. Exceptionally, only some of them were allowed to leave the plantations for some time for this purpose. Others had to take children with them, being able to feed them only at given intervals between the work. Nonetheless, some women were forbidden to leave work and could feed children only after their work was done. This usually took between 11 to 16 hours.⁷⁵

As with all aspects of slave life, it was always the master who had his last word considering how things will or will not be done, where, when or how. And the same applied for child care. Parents had only a little power to have a say in their child’s care. Thus, it could happen that parents felt upset about the master’s power. Jacobs reported a situation when her brother William was called by his mistress and his father at the same, but he did not know which one of them he should choose. Finally, William decided to go to his mistress however, his father was sad about his decision and told him: “You are my child and when I call you, you should come immediately, if you have to pass through fire and water.”⁷⁶

Boys and girls were used to the fact that they had to be dependent on other people than their parents from the time they were born. Parents were required to devote most of their time to work duties, thus only a little time was left to spend with their daughters and sons besides Sundays when most of them had the day off. When mothers and fathers left for work, children were left alone with their siblings or other slave children to raise one another. Leaving them

⁷³ Douglass, *Narrative of Life*, 146–147.

⁷⁴ Dunaway, *The African-American Family*, 134.

⁷⁵ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 53.

⁷⁶ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 12.

alone was generally unsafe as they could get into dangerous situations. Therefore, if they could, they would accompany parents to work where their mothers could keep an eye on them. On larger plantations, they went to nurseries where slaves who were unable to work would take care of them.⁷⁷ In Maryland where Douglass was born, children were frequently separated from mothers soon after they were born. This happened to him as well, his mother was working on a farm far away from him, and he was raised up by an old woman who was too old to work in fields.⁷⁸

Brown wrote down that he himself had to take care of his younger brother when their mother was working:

At this period, my principal occupation was to nurse my little brother whilst my mother worked in the field. Almost all slave children have to do the nursing; the big taking care of the small, who often come poorly off in consequence. I know this was my little brother's case. I used to lay him in the shade, under a tree, sometimes, and go to play, or curl myself up under a hedge, and take a sleep. He would wake me by his screaming, when I would find him covered with ants, or musquitos, or blistered from the heat of the sun, which having moved round whilst I was asleep, would throw the shadow of the branches in another direction, leaving the poor child quite exposed.⁷⁹

1.5. Separation

As it was already mentioned in the previous subchapter, some children were separated from mothers in their early years, provided that mothers were not allowed to take them to work. In such a case, siblings, old women or other slave child would nurse them. Separations like these were only partial as children had to wait for the time when mothers would finish work or would be allowed to take a break to feed them. Yet, some children were separated from their mothers completely soon after the birth. Mothers would be hired out on farms somewhere far away, and children would be left alone. This was a common custom in Maryland as Frederick noted:

My mother and I were separated when I was but an infant—before I knew her as my mother. It is a common custom, in the part of Maryland from which I ran away, to part children from their mothers at a very early age. Frequently, before the child has reached its twelfth month, its mother is taken from it, and hired out on some farm a considerable distance off, and the child is placed under the care of an old woman, too old for field labor.⁸⁰

Owners destroyed slave families in great numbers with the aim to maximise profits. They did not support permanent marriages or strong relationship among family members as

⁷⁷ King, *Stolen Childhood*, 13.

⁷⁸ Douglass, *Narrative of Life*, 48.

⁷⁹ Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia*, 3–4.

⁸⁰ Douglass, *Narrative of Life*, 48.

they believed that blacks' "strongest affection was to be love of his mater, his guide, protector, friend, not ties to black kin".⁸¹ It was more common for small plantation owners to separate families as they destroyed one of every four marriages as Dunaway claims.⁸²

Family separations were carefully planned long before, and masters used different strategies. The first one could be to relocate one of the parents, usually father, to a different workplace that was far away from home. Secondly, any family member could be sold, inherited or given to master's children. Lastly, masters would forbid their slave to get married to a slave from different plantation or with a free black female or male.

The absence of a father was typical for many slave narratives and masters had a reason for it. They wanted to maximise their profits, and by relocating or selling fathers, they could insist on mothers to remarry or have more children with another man. Fathers were usually relocated far away, thus it was almost impossible to maintain any contact with the family. This, children have a very little recollection of their fathers. Brown managed to see his father only once:

I remember seeing him once, when he came to visit my mother. He was very black. I never saw him but that one time, and though I was quite small, I have a distinct recollection of him. He and my mother were separated, in consequence of his master's going further off, and then my mother was forced to take another husband.⁸³

Jacobs was separated from her children when her young mistress grew up, got married, and Jacobs was required to move to a plantation and work for her mistress and her husband. While she was living and working there, she missed her children a lot. Therefore, she decided to visit them. It had to be done secretly at night when no one could see her. She had to walk six miles to reach the town.⁸⁴ At the times when Douglass was separated from his mother, she tried to visit him too:

I never saw my mother, to know her as such, more than four or five times in my life; and each of these times was very short in duration, and at night. [...] I do not recollect of ever seeing my mother by the light of day. She was with me in the night. She would lie down with me, and get me to sleep, but long before I waked she was gone. Very little communication ever took place between us.⁸⁵

Children were sold as well. If they were sold together with parents, their price was not that high as if they were sold separately. It was not very common for infants to be sold, but as children were growing up and reaching their teenage years, the probability of them being sold was higher. They were usually sold at the time when they seemed to be prepared to begin adult

⁸¹ Dunaway, *The Afro-American Family*, 53.

⁸² Dunaway, *The Afro-American Family*, 54.

⁸³ Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia*, 2.

⁸⁴ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 72.

⁸⁵ Douglass, *Narrative of Life*, 48.

work. Girls could be sold earlier than boys as they matured earlier. Many owners bought them with the view of prosperity and population growth. Some of them might be bought with the view of sexual abuse. Exceptionally, those who were pretty could be sold as prostitutes. However, this was rather rare as all slave girls were commonly bought with the desire of maintaining a workforce and growth of profit.⁸⁶

Boys were sold too. They were sold for their physical development, especially at a time when they would be able to begin working in fields. Their price depended on their abilities to work, not their age. Masters always hoped for the newly bought slaves to excel in something - that meant to be able to perform labour duties.⁸⁷ However, slaves could be sold at any time when a master was in need of money. Diseases spread among slaves or weak harvest due to bad weather conditions caused the need to sell Afro-Americans.

When any member of a family was sold, he and the rest of the family felt sorrow and often compared their feelings to those as if the person died. Sorrow and cry of mothers were significant for auctions while children were sold. Brown described a situation when his master died, and all the slaves were supposed to be sold:

They would speculate, too, on the prospects they had of being separated; to whose lot they and their children were likely to fall, and whether the husbands would go with their wives. The women who had young children cried very much. My mother did, and took to kissing us a good deal oftener. This uneasiness increased as the time wore on, for though we did not know when the great trouble would fall upon us, we all knew it would come, and were looking forward to it with very sorrowful hearts.⁸⁸

As Jacobs described in detail, slaves usually worked until Christmas Eve. Then they have holidays, and on the 1st of January, on so-called Hiring-day, they were sold. On the 2nd of January, they were expected to move to their new master. Hence on the New Year's Eve, they usually gathered together, feeling anxious and sorrow, waiting for sunrise. "At the appointed hour the grounds are thronged with men, women, and children, waiting, like criminals, to hear their doom pronounced."⁸⁹ Every now and then, they tried to persuade masters who seemed to be clothing and feeding the best to purchase them, but if any of them was unwilling to go with his new master, he would be either whipped or put into jail. 1st of January was the last day of many families when they were together.⁹⁰ The only ones who were safe and were not sold were old weak slaves.

⁸⁶ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 156–162.

⁸⁷ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 160.

⁸⁸ Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia*, 6.

⁸⁹ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 16.

⁹⁰ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 17.

1.6. The realisation

As children were growing up, they sooner or later realised that their childhood and life would not always be idyllic, but it would rather be full of fear, duties, harsh living conditions, and uncertainty as their life and position was devoted to the slaveholder who always made decisions about their lives.

It cannot be said in general when and how children became aware of their slave status as it differed from child to child. Some of them were told by family members about their status, others realised it on their own. Jacobs described in the first sentence of her narrative that her childhood was happy until she was six years old - at that time she realised she was a slave.⁹¹ She explained that when her mother died, she found out she was a slave thanks to talks around her.⁹² Despite the death of her mother, she compared her childhood to happy days as her mistress was never cruel to her and treated her like her own daughter. Unfortunately, at the age of twelve, her mistress got ill and died. She became the property of new master and mistress, and during the following years, she got to know what it was like to be a slave with all its cruelties.

In contrast, neither Douglass nor Brown did not mention the exact moment when they realised their status. Brown described in detail a time when he was a child and his mistress Betty Moore died. It was a time that caused uncertainty and uneasiness among all her slaves as they were all discussing distribution of them that was about to take a place soon. As he wrote down "I remember well the grief this caused us to feel".⁹³ And he continued: "The women who had young children cried very much. My mother did, and took to kissing us a good deal oftener."⁹⁴

Douglass described in detail how he witnessed the cruelty of his first master while he punished Douglass' aunt Hester. Although Douglass' grandmother tried to keep him away from such scenes, it arose eventually and as he stated, he never forgot it.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 9.

⁹² Jacobs, *Incidents*, 10.

⁹³ Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia*, 5.

⁹⁴ Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia*, 6.

⁹⁵ Douglass, *Narrative of Life*, 52.

2. ASPECTS OF A LIFE IN SLAVERY

2.1. Housing

The housing of slaves and masters were completely different. In general, slaves suffered from poor housing conditions and housing equipment, living in overcrowded cabins which could not protect them from various diseases or even mortality. Their homes differed in size and layout, and it could happen that various types of houses were built on one single plantation.⁹⁶ What could also vary was housing of those who lived in towns and those who lived on plantations. But in general, it all depended on how much money was an owner willing to invest in individual houses.

Many slaves were struggling to obtain own housing because owners refused to provide young couples with a separate cabin. This was especially true for young slaves who belonged to different masters as they were not allowed to live on a different plantation. In such a situation, they would have to share and inhabit one housing together with others, mainly with parents or other family members. It could happen that one cabin was occupied by three generations. But in fact, this could be particularly helpful for parents who had small children. Since they were unable to take care of their little ones during the workdays, they did not have to be scared as they knew that their children were safe with other family members who took care of them.⁹⁷

As it was already mentioned before, slaveholders used various techniques to promote women's fertility to let their wealth rise. Another one used to prompt fertility was to offer a completely furnished cabin as a benefit to women who gave birth to a child. Such a cabin provided separated housing with beds, table, chair and equipment that was needed for cooking and eating.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, not all slaves were lucky to inhabit equipped and separated cabin due to their master's unwillingness to invest any extra money to improve the slaves' living conditions. They rather believed that slaves should dedicate most of their time to working for their master. Slaves usually worked between 10 to 16 hours, depending on a season, therefore cabins only served a purpose of sleeping, eating or perhaps cooking. In case of bad weather, it also served a purpose of shelter. Nonetheless, it was not meant to be a place where slaves would maintain their family relationships.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ "Slave Housing in Virginia," Encyclopedia Virginia, accessed March 10, 2019, https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Slave_Housing_in_Virginia.

⁹⁷ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 49–50.

⁹⁸ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 191.

⁹⁹ Stampp, *Slavery*, 292.

Brown described a cabin where he lived with his mum and two siblings when he was a child as a place that was shared with other family members:

We all lived together with our mother, in a log cabin, containing two rooms, one of which we occupied; the other being inhabited by my mother's niece, Annikie, and her children. It had a mud floor; the sides were of wattle and daub, and the roof was thatched over.¹⁰⁰

The number of people sharing one cabin depended on the fact whether a plantation was large or small. If any slave lived on a large plantation, it could happen that the master would provide laborers only with few buildings to share together. Dunaway in *The African-American Family in Slavery and Emancipation* gave an example of a master who owned 49 slaves and sheltered all of them in only 3 buildings.¹⁰¹ In contrast, those who lived on small plantations shared on the average one cabin with 5 people.¹⁰² There appeared to be two types of smaller cabins – either with one or two rooms. If a cabin consisted of two rooms, they were divided by a chimney in the middle and built with a separate entrance.¹⁰³

Cabins that were provided to slaves were simple. The usual size of a cabin was from 12 to 14 feet, consisting of one room, door, and fireplace made of mud that was in the middle. Windows were considered luxurious, hence a small number of cabins included them. These buildings were usually crudely built, had thin walls which were not painted, no floor neither stoves nor lamps were included. Therefore, on the condition that slaves wanted to furnish their cabins, they had to make their own furniture.¹⁰⁴

They constructed homemade beds, chairs or tables of whatever was available but if they wanted to use wood, they could do so provided that they obtained permission. Hence, “slaves slept on the ground on mattress made of shucks, moss or grass or on piles of rags”.¹⁰⁵ When Douglass was a child, he lived at Mr. Colonel Lloyd’s plantation where everyone was provided with no bed: “old and young, male and female, married and single, drop down side by side, on one common bed,—the cold, damp floor,—each covering himself or herself with their miserable blankets”¹⁰⁶ Also, Brown and his family were not provided with beds and had to make them:

Our sleeping place was made by driving a forked stake into the floor, which served to support a cross piece of wood, one end of it resting in the crotch, the other against the

¹⁰⁰ Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia*, 2.

¹⁰¹ Dunaway, *The Afro-American Family*, 89.

¹⁰² Dunaway, *The Afro-American Family*, 91.

¹⁰³ “Slave Quarters,” George Washington’s Mount Vernon, accessed March 11, 2019, <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/slave-quarters/>.

¹⁰⁴ Stamp, *Slavery*, 294.

¹⁰⁵ Dunaway, *The Afro-American Family*, 91.

¹⁰⁶ Douglass, *Narrative of Life*, 55.

shingle that formed the wall. A plank or two across, over the top, completed the bedroom arrangements, with the exception of another plank on which we laid straw or cotton-pickings, and over that a blanket.¹⁰⁷

Interestingly, Pogue and Sanford note that those who worked as house servants and craftsmen usually lived near the Big House, whereas those who worked as agricultural workers lived near fields. If they lived on plantations where an overseer was present, he lived in a separate house that was part of the plantation's buildings. Homes of agricultural workers could be found "in single file along a road or plantation "street," in parallel rows, or randomly distributed as a "slave village".¹⁰⁸ Houses around the Big House on elite plantations were made of more durable materials, stone or brick were sometimes even used, and were designed to look better.¹⁰⁹

Living conditions in cabins were dangerous, and slaves were exposed to various risks of their health. Those who lived in overcrowded buildings exposed themselves to parasites and diseases. Since ill people were not isolated and continued living with others, diseases such as "cholera, flux, typhoid, whooping cough, measles, diphtheria or smallpox" were spread rapidly among others, causing mortality of slaves.¹¹⁰ Children were exposed to danger too:

Bacteria and insects found on a breeding ground and were carried on bare feet, and the damp, moldy floor magnified the incidence of respiratory illnesses. Children crawled and played on dirt floors, picking up worms, insect larvae, parasites and sometimes engaging in dangerous "dirt eating".¹¹¹

In contrast, housing of Afro-Americans living in towns was a little bit different. They usually lived with master and mistress together in their house where they occupied one room or a small space.¹¹² As long as Jacobs was living with her master and mistress, she lived in a room where she slept next to her great-aunt.¹¹³ When she got pregnant, she moved to the grandmother's house. Her grandmother was free black woman therefore her house was fully furnished and more comfortable compared to a housing of laborers. As she described in her narrative, nothing could make whites more furious than to see blacks "living in comfort and respectability".¹¹⁴ From time to time, white people searched houses of black people like Jacobs' grandmother to prevent any rebellion. When Jacobs knew that they would come and search the house, she decorated it with flowers and homemade quilts. While they were searching, they were furious

¹⁰⁷ Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia*, 2–3.

¹⁰⁸ "Slave Housing in Virginia"

¹⁰⁹ "Slave Housing in Virginia"

¹¹⁰ Dunaway, *The Afro-American Family*, 92.

¹¹¹ Dunaway, *The Afro-American Family*, 94.

¹¹² Dunaway, *The Afro-American Family*, 89.

¹¹³ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 29.

¹¹⁴ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 54.

and surprised looking into drawers, boxes, shelves, closet and trunk, finding out equipment and furniture that was not common for black people to own.¹¹⁵

2.2. Diet

Diet of slaves across plantations was generally poor and insufficient in comparison to hard work that they had to perform. Diet of women and men was different from the one of children, yet the number of slaves who suffered from hunger or malnutrition was high. Diet usually lacked diversity and was monotonous with few exceptions during summer time when the slaves' diet could be enriched by seasonal products. The basic weekly allowance of food that was common among slaves was "a peck of corn meal and three or four pounds of salt pork or bacon".¹¹⁶

Diet of those who lived on large plantations, small plantations, plantations not cultivating food crops or in towns could vary. Laborers living on large plantations usually had more diverse food in contrast to those who lived on small plantations or on plantations where tobacco or cotton was cultivated. Slaveholders of such plantations were usually unable to provide laborers with diverse and enough food, so they faced hunger more than those who were part of larger plantations. On the other hand, laborers on large plantations could face hunger as well, especially during winter when their masters run out of food supply.¹¹⁷

When the food supply ran low, slaves were sent hunting. Moreover, they hunted and fished in their free time or when they felt hungry. That was one possible solution that they could do. Secondly, if their master allowed so and if they were provided with small gardens, they could grow their own extra items to add to their weekly allowance of food. They usually grew "sorghum, okra, cowpeas, onions, peppers, garlic, herbs, eggplant, sesame, watermelon, squash, pumpkin, yams, and black-eyed peas".¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, we must keep in mind that the harvest could happen to be unsuccessful, thus they would face hunger anyway. In view of the fact that not everyone was provided with extra garden or was allowed to grow his own items, it was common for slaves to steal food of white people when they were hungry.

They could steal food from plantations, gardens or from the master's Big House at nights but they always had to do it secretly not to be caught and whipped. Douglass himself was not provided with enough food, he was only allowed "less than a half of a bushel of corn-meal per week, and very little else, either in the shape of meat or vegetables" therefore whenever

¹¹⁵ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 54–56.

¹¹⁶ Stamp, *Slavery*, 282.

¹¹⁷ Dunaway, *The Afro-American Family*, 102.

¹¹⁸ Dunaway, *The Afro-American Family*, 107.

he was hungry, he used to steal food.¹¹⁹ He also mentioned an example of others stealing food from the master. Mr. Colonel Lloyd, one of his former masters, had a garden full of fruits which attracted a lot of his slaves:

This garden was not the least source of trouble on the plantation. Its excellent fruit was quite a temptation to the hungry swarms of boys, as well as the older slaves, belonging to the colonel, few of whom had the virtue or the vice to resist it. Scarcely a day passed, during the summer, but that some slave had to take the lash for stealing fruit.¹²⁰

In general, diet of adults consisted of corn which could be used for the production of cornbread and wheat. They were also provided with pork meat, but such supply was not very frequent. Some masters also provided laborers with sweet potatoes, coffee, sugar, eggs or salt – but it was rare. During summer, slaves could “only use the rotting fruit that had fallen from trees”.¹²¹ They rarely received fresh one as they were mostly supplied with dried fruits and vegetables. Those who were living in coastal regions could happen to be provided with fish, lobsters, and crabs. In contrast, many slaves never tasted fresh fruits and vegetables, fresh milk or eggs.¹²²

Brown was lucky to be occasionally provided with sour milk but on the other hand, Mr. James Davis, his former master, never provided his laborers with meat: “Our allowance of food was one peck of corn a week to each full-grown slave. We never had meat of any kind, and our usual drink was water. Sometimes, however, we got a drink of sour milk or a little hard cider.”¹²³ Food was usually distributed to adults or heads of families once a week, either on Sunday or in midweek. Then, mothers could cook meals every night in the cabin after they were done with duties in fields or slaves took the daily portion to a cookhouse where a cook would make two of their daily meals.¹²⁴

When a woman got pregnant, her eating habits barely changed. She was not provided with an extra supply of food nor a special diet as masters believed that pregnant women should be fine with their allowance of food. Though many of them or their husbands tried to satisfy their cravings by stealing food or growing their own items, they were not always successful. Thus, they suffered from unsatisfied cravings and inadequate nutrition.¹²⁵

When a child was born, he was nurtured. Unfortunately, masters wanted women to return to work as soon as possible, as well as they wanted women to dedicate most of their time

¹¹⁹ Douglass, *Narrative of Life*, 96.

¹²⁰ Douglass, *Narrative of Life*, 59.

¹²¹ Dunaway, *The Afro-American Family*, 109.

¹²² Stampp, *Slavery*, 284.

¹²³ Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia*, 11.

¹²⁴ Schneider et al., *Slavery in America*, 80.

¹²⁵ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 31–32.

to work duties. Therefore, they designed a schedule with restrictions on infants weaning. Although infants were supposed to be weaned 10 times a day or more, slave mothers could wean them only two or three times a day. As they were growing older, mothers were restricted to wean them only twice a day – in the morning before they left to work, and in the evening when they came back home. In contrast, women who were allowed to take children to work could feed them whenever they wanted.¹²⁶

Infants were suggested to be weaned until they were one year old and afterwards, they were supplied with a diet that was poor and insufficient. They were mostly fed with “cow’s milk, thin porridge, “potlicker” (the broth left in a pot after greens were cooked), a mixture of mush and skimmed milk, or bread mashed into gravy”. Unfortunately, these items were unhygienic, and many infants were unable to digest them due to their intolerance to lactose.¹²⁷

Diet of children usually consisted of bread, buttermilk, mush, cornmeal, peas and rarely of meat. For example, plantations consisting of more than one hundred Afro-American children provided them with only 15 kg of meat per week – that was about 16 g of meat per a day for each child.¹²⁸ They were eating together with other children for the reason that they were sharing food in one big container. Mintz notes that this container served not only to children for eating but to dogs and ducks as well.¹²⁹ Douglass described that when he was a child, he was provided with cornmeal mush, being treated like an animal while eating it:

It was put into a large wooden tray or trough, and set down upon the ground. The children were then called, like so many pigs, and like so many pigs they would come and devour the mush; some with oyster-shells, others with pieces of shingle, some with naked hands, and none with spoons.¹³⁰

At the times when Jacobs was small, she was very lucky to have her grandmother. Her and other slaves’ diet at Mr. Flint’s house was not any different from other slaves. As she noted, it was poor and inadequate because Mr. Flint paid little attention to diet of his laborers.¹³¹ Mrs. Flint was very strict about food allowance and would never make it possible for slaves to steal any food as she always weighted out everything in the kitchen three times a day.¹³² Luckily, Jacobs never suffered from hunger while living with them as her grandmother always prepared her some extra food whenever she stopped at her house.

¹²⁶ Dunaway, *The Afro-American Family*, 135.

¹²⁷ Mintz, *Huck’s Raft*, 96.

¹²⁸ Šárka Bubiková. “We Were But Property – Not a Mother, and the Children God Had Given Her:” The Figure of a Child in Abolitionist Literature. *American and British Studies Annual* 7 (2014): 38–47.

¹²⁹ Mintz, *Huck’s Raft*, 101.

¹³⁰ Douglass, *Narrative of Life*, 72.

¹³¹ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 13.

¹³² Jacobs, *Incidents*, 15.

As can be seen, Afro-Americans in general were provided with insufficient diet without any diversity which had its consequences. Adults were malnourished, and their diet lacked vitamin B, vitamin D, iron, protein, zinc, calcium, and amino acids. These deficiencies could result in pellagra, sore eyes, cracked lips, intestinal diseases, respiratory infections and deformities of joints.¹³³ Deficiencies in diet of children resulted in malnourishment, retarded growth, decelerated metabolism, lowered levels of psychomotor, and suffering from problem-solving and language skills.¹³⁴

2.3. Clothing

Similarly, to housing and diet, clothes provided to slaves by masters could be characterised as poor, inadequate and uncomfortable. This was because masters issued Afro-Americans with only two outfits per year – one for winter and one for summer. Moreover, they were unwilling to invest any extra money into clothing. They believed that two outfits per year were enough and if their laborers were of different opinion, they were expected to buy or make any extra clothing.

Dress for women was made without taking into consideration possible changes of the body. Thus, during pregnancy dress of any female “were painfully tight and “would split” as they gained weight”. Women were not even issued with any underwear, so as long as their body began to change, and the dress split, they felt that they had no privacy while working on plantations, especially if they were working together with men. Not only did not the dress provide them with any privacy, but it also did not protect them from injuries and did not keep their breast clean for breastfeeding.¹³⁵

Only a few mothers were swaddling their newly born baby others were reluctant to swaddling. If they swaddled the little ones, they used red flannel until it was completely destroyed and could not be used any more.¹³⁶ But as swaddling of infants was rather rare, many infants did not wear anything because slave babies in general were not provided with any clothes. If they happened to be given some clothes, they were wearing “long shirt-frowns with “just a hole on each side for the arms and one for the head””.¹³⁷

¹³³ Dunaway, *The Afro-American Family*, 112.

¹³⁴ Dunaway, *The Afro-American Family*, 148.

¹³⁵ Dunaway, *The Afro-American Family*, 88.

¹³⁶ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 43.

¹³⁷ Dunaway, *The Afro-American Family*, 85.

Brown and Douglass both described that it was very common for children of both sexes to be naked and barefooted until they reached the age when they were ready to begin working. Brown noted that children would wear an old shirt when “they had to go anywhere very particular for their mistress, or up to the great house”.¹³⁸ Douglass noted that boys and girls at Colonel Lloyd’s plantation who were unable to work were provided with two “coarse linen shirts per year”.¹³⁹ Douglass also added that due to nakedness and inadequate distribution of clothing, slaves were cold during winter. As this season of a year was harsh for him, he used to steal a bag which was used for corn, and he would sleep in it.¹⁴⁰

As soon as children were ten years old, they were considered to be able to begin their work. At this point, they were provided with two outfits and shoes per year. Douglass described what particular clothes were males and females issued with: “Their yearly clothing consisted of two coarse linen shirts, one pair of linen trousers, like the shirts, one jacket, one pair of trousers for winter, made of coarse negro cloth, one pair of stockings, and one pair of shoes; the whole of which could not have cost more than seven dollars.”¹⁴¹

Clothes for slaves was of poor quality and usually did not last for long. The reason behind this was that such clothes were not designed to be comfortable or fashionable, but to be cheap.¹⁴² Typical material used to produce clothes for slaves was homespun woven. Owners could also provide their laborers with “Negro cloth” that was manufactured and made of “calicoes, nankeens, osnaburges, tows, linsey-woolseys, cassimeres, ducks, kerseys, and Kentucky jeans”. Jacobs noted that she hated the linsey-woolsey dresses that Mrs. Flint provided her with every winter.¹⁴³

Interestingly, Gruber in the encyclopaedia entry *Slave Clothing and Adornment in Virginia* writes that clothes of agricultural workers, house servants, and slaves with higher status could differ. Those who worked in fields were usually provided with cheap outfits whereas those who worked in the Big House or had to wear uniform were provided with outfits of high-quality fabric. This was because they were visible in the clothes to both master’s family and guests in the house, therefore, such outfits had to reflect their position and represent the owner’s family.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁸ Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia*, 4.

¹³⁹ Douglass, *Narrative of Life*, 54.

¹⁴⁰ Douglass, *Narrative of Life*, 71.

¹⁴¹ Douglass, *Narrative of Life*, 54.

¹⁴² “Slave Clothing and Adornment in Virginia,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, accessed March 12, 2019, https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Slave_Clothing_and_Adornment_in_Virginia.

¹⁴³ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 13.

¹⁴⁴ “Slave Clothing and Adornment in Virginia.”

Mintz describes that slaves received shoes rarely whereas children usually did not receive them at all. If they did, it was during winter when it was cold. Most children were usually provided with moccasins made by their fathers.¹⁴⁵ When Jacobs was a child, her shoes were old and inappropriate, therefore her mother decided to give her a new one. But these new shoes were too noisy which did not appear to her new mistress. She was asked to take them off and was punished for wearing them:

When I walked through Mrs. Flint's room, their creaking grated harshly on her refined nerves. She called me to her, and asked what I had about me that made such a horrid noise. I told her it was my new shoes. "Take them off," said she; "and if you put them on again, I'll throw them into the fire."

I took them off, and my stockings also. She then sent me a long distance, on an errand. As I went through the snow, my bare feet tingled. That night I was very hoarse; and I went to bed thinking the next day would find me sick, perhaps dead. What was my grief on waking to find myself quite well!¹⁴⁶

The more teenagers were growing up, the more were they working, and the less were their owners willing to invest any extra money in clothing. Thus, they were required to either purchase extra pieces of cloth on their own or produce it.¹⁴⁷ They could use raw materials issued by owners or buy patterned or lightly coloured textiles, cut it for garments and sew by hands. Foodstuff, mostly indigo, if available could be used to dye the textiles.¹⁴⁸

2.4. Leisure time

Until the teenage years, when children were considered to be prepared to begin working on plantations, they usually did a little work, mostly helped master, mistress or parents. Thus, they had a lot of free time that they could spend playing around with friends. But once teenagers began to work their leisure time was gone and restricted only to Sundays, Christmas or other feasts when they usually had the day off.

Children regardless of their sexes played together, with the exception of few games which were specific to either girls or boys. Girls liked to play with dolls and engage in ring games and dances. They also liked to pretend that they were washing dishes, cleaning house, cooking meals and serving them, taking care of babies or dressing up. Whereas boys liked to engage in sports games which showed their strength.¹⁴⁹

When children spend the leisure time together, among all the games, the most favourite ones were "Hide the Switch" and "No Bogeyman Tonight". In the first game, they were looking

¹⁴⁵ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 100.

¹⁴⁶ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 19-20.

¹⁴⁷ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 133.

¹⁴⁸ "Slave Clothing and Adornment in Virginia."

¹⁴⁹ King, *Stolen Childhood*, 45.

for a hidden switch and whoever found it, he ran after others trying to hit them. In the second game, one selected child was trying to catch others while they were trying to run from behind big trees. If the child managed to catch someone, they would swap the roles and the caught child would try to catch someone else.¹⁵⁰ Some games were traditional – they were passed down over generations. But some were created on the spot, using improvisation and creativity.¹⁵¹

The two games mentioned above and games like these were powerful because they were shaping children's personalities and helped them to understand the slave status together with all its fears. Boys and girls were let to raise one another, and due to different games, they could discover their strengths and weaknesses. While playing games, they could also become literate by learning ABC's or to count.¹⁵² Games like "Hide the Switch" helped them to cope with the fear of whipping and enabled them to find out strategies on how to react to whipping and how they could avoid it. Later, some of them used these strategies when masters wanted to whip them.¹⁵³

Games often reflected slavery life and incidents that children witnessed during childhood. This would usually be presented in the form of a role play where boys and girls could face the life of whites and blacks as they were usually pretending to be slaves, masters, auctioneers, preachers and various family members. Furthermore, as Eugene D. Genovese claims games through which children could face whipping or auction helped them to cope with their fears.¹⁵⁴

During various games children used to sing songs or say riddles in which they could comment on their fears:

Run nigger, run.
De patteroll git you!
Run nigger tun.
De patteroll come!
Watch nigger, watch.
De patteroll trick you!

¹⁵⁰ David K. Wiggins, "The Play of Slave Children in the Plantation Communities of the Old South, 1820-1860", in *Growing Up in America: Children in Historical Perspective*, ed. Ray N. Hiner and Joseph M. Hawes, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 178.

¹⁵¹ "African American Leisure Lifestyles," Encyclopedia.com, accessed March 12, 2019, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/african-american-leisure-lifestyles>.

¹⁵² Wiggins, "The Play of Slave Children in the Plantation Communities of the Old South, 1820-1860", 177.

¹⁵³ King, *Stolen Childhood*, 48.

¹⁵⁴ King, *Stolen Childhood*, 48.

Watch nigger, watch.

He got a big gun.¹⁵⁵

Or they could also berate the whites:

My old mistress promised me,

Before she dies she would set me free.

Now she's dead and gone to hell

I hope the devil will burn her.¹⁵⁶

When slave children were young, they could happen to play with both other slave children and white children as well. While they were young, they could not properly understand the difference between Afro-American and white children, but once they grew up, they understood it. Many white children realised the attitude of their parents toward slaves, they soon began to feel superior and treated slave children with the same authority as their fathers did. Moreover, "when young masters broke the rules, the blame was likely to fall upon an enslaved child. When black youngsters "got into a fuss" with their masters' sons, they paid the price for childhood "insolence".¹⁵⁷

There was also one more difference between white and black children. Parents of white children usually had enough money to provide them with toys like dolls or special dishes made for children. Whereas black children had to make their own game playing equipment using whatever was available. They used branches, tree limbs, needles, clay, rags, string or acorns to make dolls, playhouse, balls, cups, saucers or horses.¹⁵⁸

During Sundays, Christmas or other special days, slaves had the day off. During these days, children went with their fathers fishing and hunting or were told stories by different family members about their transport to America. Fishing was immensely enjoyed by both fathers and offspring since there were not many activities on plantations in which they could both participate together. In winter, adults together with the small ones would sit by the fire and pop corn.¹⁵⁹ During Christmas, family members were trying to spend most of their time together as they knew that 1st of January was coming and that they could be separated through auctions.¹⁶⁰ Members of plantations spent time together, sang songs, danced, talked, and cooked various meals. On some plantations they could be provided with extra items such as "cakes of all kinds,

¹⁵⁵ Wiggins, "The Play of Slave Children in the Plantation Communities of the Old South, 1820-1860", 177.

¹⁵⁶ Wiggins, "The Play of Slave Children in the Plantation Communities of the Old South, 1820-1860", 177.

¹⁵⁷ Dunaway, *The Afro-American Family*, 76.

¹⁵⁸ King, *Stolen Childhood*, 45.

¹⁵⁹ "African American Leisure Lifestyles."

¹⁶⁰ King, *Stolen Childhood*, 56-59.

fresh meat, lightbread, turkeys, turkeys, chickens, ducks, geese, [...] pecans, apples, dried peaches” or even with alcohol.¹⁶¹

2.5. Early Labour Duties of Slave Children

The time when children were required to begin working differed from child to child – many of them began at the age of ten, but they could also begin between their 10th to 16th year of life. During their teenage years, they were required to work in fields or in the Big House. The more they grew, the more experienced they became in order to substitute adult laborers. Nonetheless, many children were forced to grow up fast and began working or at least helping with lighter tasks at the age of five or six.¹⁶²

Factors that influenced master’s decision that any of his slave children was prepared to begin were different. Some masters waited until they were sure that children were mature and had enough strength which was needed for hard work. Others forced children to begin soon in order to make their wealth grow. As Mintz claims, slaveholders were aware of the fact that young children had a great value compared to infants whose death rate was high and who were valued only at 25\$. A three-year-old child was valued at 150\$, and a twelve-year-old youth was valued at 800\$ in contrast to an adult male who was valued at 1,500\$.¹⁶³

Unfortunately, childhood of black children was full of harsh conditions, and some of them decided to begin working sooner with the view of escaping hunger and receiving cloths. Children who were not working were provided with a one-half peck of cornmeal and one pound of bacon whereas those who were working were provided with one and a half pecks of corn meal and two and a half pounds of bacon.¹⁶⁴ Apart from extra allowance, young laborers were also provided with clothes and their own blankets that they were not provided before. This was because mothers were usually given only a few blankets which were not enough for all their children, thus it was common that one blanket was shared among two or more children.¹⁶⁵

As it was already mentioned, young slaves either worked in fields or in the Big House. In addition, they could also assist master or mistress whenever it was needed. They either worked in labour gangs together with adults, performed work individually, which was rather common for personal services or could have done their work in pairs if a task was too difficult

¹⁶¹ Georgia Baker in *Bullwhip Days: The Slaves Remembered*, ed. James Mellon (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988), 10.

¹⁶² Dunaway, *The Afro-American Family*, 72.

¹⁶³ Mintz, *Huck’s Raft*, 102.

¹⁶⁴ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 139.

¹⁶⁵ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 141.

to be done only by one.¹⁶⁶ Despite the fact that masters wanted children regardless their sexes to be able to perform all kinds of chores, those connected to households were usually performed by girls whereas boys were expected to perform hard field chores. Nevertheless, both girls and boys were required to take part in the cultivation of any crop.¹⁶⁷

When children were required to assist parents or work together with labour gangs in fields, they usually began as human scarecrows whose task was to keep birds away from demolishing crops that were intended either for market or consumptions. In other cases, they could be asked to help harvest wheat, trash rice, load ships with the grain or pull weeds.¹⁶⁸ The typical sequence of chores done by any boy would be tending cows at the age of seven or eight, then he would carry water to fields between the age of eight and ten, and afterwards he would begin to wield a hoe.¹⁶⁹ During busy seasons, both girls and boys could be asked either to go to the fields to let others know about the dinner being served or were required to carry it for laborers to the fields. If they were supposed to carry it to the field, they must not eat any of the food, otherwise they would be punished.

At the times when Brown was owned by his first mistress, Betty Moore, apart from taking care of his baby brother he was also required together with other children to grow garlic for market.¹⁷⁰ When he was sold to his second master, James Davis, he was required to work as a child and must perform chores that were usually performed by adults. He was put to grab a hoe, making fences, grubbing bushes, fetching and burning brush or picking off tobacco-worms from the leaves.¹⁷¹ After he was sold to his second master, Thomas Stevens, he had to:

carry whiskey from the still-house to the store, and meal from the mill-house to the still. I also had to carry his breakfast to a slave of the name of John Glasgow, who was at that time employed up in the woods chopping billets for the still.¹⁷²

Douglass described that when he was a child at Colonel Lloyd's plantation, the chores he had to do were following:

I was not old enough to work in the field, and there being little else than field work to do, I had a great deal of leisure time. The most I had to do was to drive up the cows at evening, keep the fowls out of the garden, keep the front yard clean, and run of errands for my old master's daughter, Mrs. Lucretia Auld. The most of my leisure time I spent in helping Master Daniel Lloyd in finding his birds, after he had shot them.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁶ King, *Stolen Childhood*, 23.

¹⁶⁷ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 137.

¹⁶⁸ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 145.

¹⁶⁹ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 134.

¹⁷⁰ Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia*, 3.

¹⁷¹ Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia*, 12.

¹⁷² Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia*, 23.

¹⁷³ Douglass, *Narrative of Life*, 71.

He also noted that while he was staying with Mr. Covey, he had to work all the time no matter what was the weather like.¹⁷⁴

Though chores performed in masters' houses could appear easier in comparison to work in fields, it was not necessarily always true. Household chores required several skills and strength as well. Young children usually worked in the house until they were big enough to begin in fields. When working in the Big House, children usually looked after owner's children, cleaned house, served food or fanned owners.¹⁷⁵ They could also be asked to cook for master and mistress and do laundering. However, these two kinds of jobs required certain skills which were beyond the competence of most of them. As King adds "meal preparation included carrying water, chopping or hauling wood, and building fires" and the cook had to always satisfy his owners.¹⁷⁶

This was not easy as Jacobs described in her narrative. Dr. Flint was very serious about any food he was served by his cook and if he happens to not like a particular dish he was served, he would either whip or force the cook to eat every bite of the dish in his presence. Moreover, the cook was once ordered to prepare a mush for his dog but unfortunately, the dog refused to eat it, and after a few minutes he died. Dr. Flint believed it was the cook's mistake and he forced her to eat the mush.¹⁷⁷ When Jacobs was six, she began to work in Dr. Flint's house, and she remained there until her teenage years. However, when she refused to move to a cabin that was built on a secret place by Dr. Flint, she was sent to work in fields. At that time, she was nineteen years old.

The skills needed for various kinds of labour could be learnt in various ways. Firstly, children could learn new skills by working together with others. Secondly, if they were willing to master a particular skill, parents could help them. And lastly, wealthy masters could provide their talented slaves with training, or they sent them to schools in city centres. Training provided to boys taught them how to become "gentleman's servant" whereas girls were taught how to dress mistress hair, how to sew fashionable dress, and how to prepare pastries.¹⁷⁸

Fox-Genovese adds that "It was widely believed that the best way to develop good house servants, who were notoriously difficult to come by, was to raise them. In effect the mistress, ably seconded if not outclassed by the cook or mammy, presided over a kind of primary school

¹⁷⁴ Douglass, *Narrative of Life*, 105.

¹⁷⁵ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 102.

¹⁷⁶ King, *Stolen Childhood*, 27.

¹⁷⁷ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 24.

¹⁷⁸ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 149.

for servants.”.¹⁷⁹ Nevertheless, it is important to say that master had the last word as to what new skill should young slaves learn and from whom they should learn.

2.6. Education

Literacy of slaves was not welcomed by all slaveholders as many of them believed that the only concern of slaves should be to perform their work duties and be submissive to owners. They believed that literacy of slaves would spoil any slave, would lead to his freedom, and moreover, it was against the law to teach them to read and write as Douglass described.¹⁸⁰ They rather preferred young laborers to master various skills in order to perform work. Only a few of them allowed slaves to learn how to read to be able to read the Bible. In general, the number of slaves who could read and write before the Civil War was small, but as soon as the Thirteen Amendment came into effect, all blacks were allowed to become literate.

Many parents also did not support the idea of literacy and rather preferred to teach children manners that would help them to avoid getting into troubles with master and help them to survive in the slave system. Parents tried to teach and give advice to children whenever they could. Most of the teaching happened during evenings when parents were done with their duties.¹⁸¹ They also helped their children with the process of learning working skills provided that they had already mastered them. Learning from parents was usually done by observation, listening to instructions or by imitation.

Apart from learning good manners and skills, parents or other family members told young ones about African culture and history through their recollections and stories. Such stories were usually told during bedtime and could function as an educative tool since the characters usually belonged to the same species and stuck together like the slaves did, were helpful and nice to one another. If the characters in the stories were represented as animals, they had human properties. Master or any other cruel character could appear in the stories, and if they happened to, they were usually represented by fox or wolf. Therefore, children could always easily distinguish between the oppressor and the oppressed person.¹⁸²

Grandparents or other older adults also taught children about preventive medicine, treatment of diseases, astronomy, butchering, what they should do to ensure themselves good

¹⁷⁹ Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina press, 1988), 153.

¹⁸⁰ Douglass, *Narrative of Life*, 78.

¹⁸¹ King, *Stolen Childhood*, 71.

¹⁸² King, *Stolen Childhood*, 72.

luck, or how they could recognise different plants and roots. Children learnt when to plant and what crops, how to take care of a baby, or how to keep spirits away.¹⁸³ Parents and older adults who raised children as Christians took their teaching seriously and encouraged children to take their faith seriously and pray to God whenever it was necessary.

Jacobs' grandmother was a strong believer, and whatever happened to her or her family, she always believed it was God's will no matter whether it was good or bad. She encouraged her children to believe in God and pray to him as well. As she claimed, whenever she was in trouble and had no one to help her, she called on God who helped her to lighten her burdens, thus she advised her children to do so when they were in trouble.¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, whenever something good happened to Jacobs' grandmother or to any of her child, she "raised her hands, and exclaimed, "God be praised! Let us thank him." She dropped on her knees, and poured forth her heart in prayer."¹⁸⁵

Education provided by masters was usually based on teaching skills that young laborers needed to master in order to perform the work correctly. Masters also taught the young ones habits of obedience for which they sometimes used punishment as one of the methods. They believed that children in teenage years were able to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, therefore, they did not want to necessarily punish them as they did not want to frighten them, however in some cases it was unavoidable. All in all, they primarily aimed to teach the young ones to become obedient and hard-working.¹⁸⁶ Brown described that when he was a slave he was only taught how to work and received no education, nor he was taught to pray to God.¹⁸⁷

Occasionally, owners required young slaves to master a particular skill that they had not mastered yet. In such a case, masters would ask those who were capable of the given skill to provide children with training and help while mastering a new skill. It was very frequent that children would join adults, observe them, try to imitate them, and once they learnt new working skills, they would also help them. This system proved to be very beneficial for masters. Children were used to working together with adults and not only did they help them and therefore the productivity of laborers increased, but by working together with experienced adults, children

¹⁸³ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 124.

¹⁸⁴ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 22.

¹⁸⁵ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 25.

¹⁸⁶ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 108.

¹⁸⁷ Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia*, 69 and 161.

were also provided with training and supervision.¹⁸⁸ Those who were required to work at the Big House were trained either by older slaves, mistress, or overseer's wives.

Exceptionally, few jobs required slaves to be able to read and write, otherwise, it was rare as they were generally expected to work in fields or to do household chores. If any job required them to be literate in order to perform the job, they were sent to schools where they were taught how to read and write. Otherwise, they were forbidden and denied access to education and written materials.¹⁸⁹

For that reason, the only way they could learn to read and write was either to learn from white children or if they happened to know any slave child who had already mastered such skills, they asked him to share his knowledge. Despite the fact, that black children were denied literacy, white children paid little attention to this fact and enjoyed teaching their black friends using the techniques that their teachers used.¹⁹⁰ Unlike the blacks, white children were not in danger for teaching their black friends. However, the blacks risked punishment in case they even looked into a book or if their master found out that they could read.¹⁹¹

When Douglass was a child, he showed a strong desire for literacy. In the beginning, he learnt A, B, C and afterwards he learnt how to spell words that consisted of three or four letters together with the help of his mistress Mrs. Auld. Nonetheless, the assistance of his mistress did not last for long because Mr. and Mrs. Auld soon realised it was not a good idea and denied him with any other access to education. However, Douglass was willing to continue in his studies, and he found his way. To learn to read, he tried to make as many white friends as he could, who knew how to read and who helped him to learn to read in exchange for bread.¹⁹²

In order to learn to write, he adopted a similar plan – he firstly learnt himself to write four letters by copying ship carpenters who wrote “on the timber the name of that part of the ship for which it was intended” and afterwards:

when I met with any boy who I knew could write, I would tell him I could write as well as he. The next word would be, "I don't believe you. Let me see you try it." I would then make the letters which I had been so fortunate as to learn and ask him to beat that. In this way I got a good many lessons in writing, which it is quite possible I should never have gotten in any other way.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 117.

¹⁸⁹ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 150.

¹⁹⁰ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 151.

¹⁹¹ Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 153.

¹⁹² Douglass, *Narrative of Life*, 82.

¹⁹³ Douglass, *Narrative of Life*, 86 – 87.

Jacobs was lucky for being given the opportunity to become literate as her mistress supported the idea of literacy and was willing to teach her to read and spell. Jacobs knew that such a situation was rather rare and was thankful for being allowed to become literate.¹⁹⁴ Other slaves were aware of the fact that she could read and frequently asked her to read newspapers to them.¹⁹⁵ Moreover, she was asked by an old black man to teach him. She knew it was against the law and if anyone would find it out, they could be both whipped and imprisoned but she promised to teach him and so she did.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 11.

¹⁹⁵ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 39.

¹⁹⁶ Jacobs, *Incidents*, 61.

3. CONCLUSION

Slave children who were born at the times when slavery was practised in America were living a life full of hardship, cruelty and fear. The lives of children were not different from those of adult slaves in terms of the harsh conditions as adults were not provided with any better conditions nor advantages. It was not easy to survive in this system. Due to improper diet and living conditions, many pregnant women miscarried. In contrast, women who gave birth to children were not assured that their baby would survive as the mortality rate of babies was high.

It did not matter whether a child was born to a slave woman and slave man, or a free black man because every child followed his mother's slave status, and nothing could be done against it. Children became a property of the mother's master who was very powerful as he decided about everything concerning their life. Unfortunately, this cannot be said about fathers and mothers who could have only a little say in their upbringing. Owners were the ones who had the right to decide about diet, clothing, labour, free time, or education.

Slave children were seen as a source of economic wealth and labour force, therefore owners forced young slave women to reproduce as soon as possible. The reason behind this was that newly born children were expected to replace old working slaves. Until the age of five, children were usually not required to work. They were asked to take care of younger siblings, and if they were allowed to, they could spend their free time playing various games and singing songs with other children. They were left alone, expected to take care after themselves because mothers and fathers had to work every day except Sundays from morning till the afternoon.

When the little ones turned five, they were often required to perform light chores, help parents in fields, or help with house chores in the Big House. And as soon as they reached the teenage years, they were required to perform regular work tasks together with other laborers. Apart from being issued with summer and winter clothes and extra food allowance, the labour performance did not bring children any other profit. It rather exposed them to dangerous working and living conditions, a possibility of being whipped by master, or a separation from their family if they were sold.

As it was already said, to be a slave meant to live a hard life since this peculiar institution influenced every single aspect of any slave's life. Slaves were expected to obey the slaveholders and to perform all work tasks they were required to. Many of them wished to be freed, however to become free was not easy at all, owing to the fact that there were only two options to become so. Firstly, slaves could buy themselves, but it was almost impossible. Or they could run away. Nevertheless, this was difficult as they had to keep an eye on white people all the time who could possibly return them back to their master.

To examine slave childhood, two male and one female slave narratives were chosen – Harriet Jacobs, Frederick Douglass and John Brown. These authors also provided with gender differences in narratives. Harriet Jacobs as a representer of female slave narratives stressed more the role of women. She illustrated various threatens that women had to face when masters or his sons decided to sexually exploit them. Slave women were expected to obey their master and his family members, and whenever they tried to defend themselves, they were whipped or even killed. Furthermore, female narratives commonly captured the role of women – to reproduce and therefore make the master a wealthier man. In contrast, for male narrators was more common to present their hunger for literacy and freedom. They depicted in detail how they overcame obstacles in order to read and write and how they managed to escape.

To conclude, all three slave narratives chosen for the examination of slave childhood were born and grew up as slaves. All three authors were exposed to dangers and insufficient life conditions from the time they were born which influenced their lives and personalities. Though Jacobs, Douglass and Brown covered different issues and details of childhood, all their insights are compared and described with the help of scholarly literature.

4. RESUMÉ

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá dětstvím černých otroků v Americe a jeho zachycení ve vybraných vyprávěních uprchlých otroků, tzv. "slave narratives". Práce se zabývá problémy a aspekty života dětí od jejich narození až po dospívání, s použitím sekundární literatury je popisuje a porovnává, jak byly zachyceny ve vybraných vyprávěních. Autoři a jejich vyprávění jež byla vybrána pro tuto práci, také rovněž poukazují na rozdíly v mužských a ženských dílech. Ženy spíše poukazují na role žen v otrockých komunitách a více zdůrazňují pouto rodiny, zatímco muži ve svých vyprávěních kladou důraz na vzdělání a jak se jim podařilo naučit se číst a psát. Autoři, kteří byli pro tuto práci vybráni, se narodili a vyrůstali jako otroci a jejich vyprávění sdílí několik stejných charakteristik. Ovšem v určitých aspektech se liší a každý z nich popisuje různé zkušenosti. Pro tuto práci byli vybráni Frederick Douglass, John Brown a Harriet Jacobs.

Otroctví bylo v Americe praktikováno od 17. až do poloviny 19. století a ovlivňovalo nejen životy samotných otroků, ale i těch, kteří je vlastnili, těch, kteří s nimi obchodovali, jejich bohatství a prosperitu, ale i především ekonomiku Ameriky. Černošští otroci byli do Nového světa transportováni z Afriky na lodích až do začátku 19. století, kdy byl transport otroků z Afriky zakázán. Nicméně několik překupníků v dovozu otroků pokračovalo i nadále. Černošští otroci byly od samého začátku shledávány jako levná pracovní síla, tudíž otrokáři, kteří chtěli mít i nadále vyšší příjem a počet pracovníků, vymýšleli a hledali různé strategie a způsoby, jak počet neustále navyšovat.

Jedním z nejčastějších způsobů byla reprodukce. Reprodukce se očekávala od všech žen bez ohledu na jejich věk, tedy i od velice mladých dívek, kterým bylo například patnáct let. Ženy buď počaly dítě se svým manželem či přítelem nebo se také mohlo stát, že byly znásilněny otrokářem či jeho syny. Přestože otrokáři považovali reprodukci za jeden z nejefektivnějších způsobů, jak snadno a levně rozšířit svůj počet otroků, tento způsob měl i svá úskalí, díky kterým mohli o nového otroka přijít. Matky obvykle nedostávaly jídlo navíc, jejich oblečení nebylo přizpůsobeno možným změnám těla a očekávalo se od nich, že i nadále během těhotenství budou vykonávat svou práci, dokud to bude možné. Ženy častokrát musely vykonávat fyzicky těžkou práci a žily ve velice špatných hygienických podmínkách.

Všechny tyto faktory mohly vést k tomu, že žena potratila. Pokud žena zvládla těhotenství a porodila dítě, nic zatím nebylo vyhráno. Ženy častokrát čekaly několik dnů či týdnů a až poté, co si byly jisty, že je dítě v pořádku a nehrozí mu riziko úmrtí se rozhodly ho pojmenovat. Nezáleželo na tom, jestli se dítě narodilo rodičům, kteří byli otroci stejného či

jiného otrokáře nebo jestli otec dítěte byl svobodný černošský muž, ve všech případech dítě ihned získalo status otroka a stalo se majetkem otrokáře, kterému patřila i matka.

Poté, co se dítě narodilo, mohla matka s dítětem několik týdnů zůstat, ovšem očekávalo se od ní, že jakmile to půjde, vrátí se co nejdříve zpět ke svým povinnostem. Proto se velmi často stávalo, že malé děti zůstávaly doma pod dohledem svých starších sourozenců nebo starých otrokyň, které byly už příliš staré na to, aby musely pracovat. Nebylo velmi časté, aby si ženy ze své práce mohly několikrát za den odskočit a nakojit své děti. Mnoho z nich tedy muselo nakojit své děti ráno před tím, než odešly do práce a následovně až večer, když se vrátily. Pokud měly dovoleno od svého otrokáře, mohly jednou či dvakrát během dne dojít své děti nakojit. Výjimkou byly ženy, které pracovaly na polích. Ty častokrát braly své děti s sebou a nechávaly je odpočívat pod stromem. Takto je měly po celou dobu pod dohledem a kdykoliv se něco stalo, mohly k nim odběhnout.

Malé děti nemusely pracovat, jejich jedinou povinností, pokud to bylo potřeba, bylo se postarat o jejich mladší sourozence. Jinak mohly svůj volný čas trávit s ostatními otrokářskými dětmi. Pokud to otrokář či jeho žena nezakázali, mohly si černošské a bílé děti hrát spolu. Děti častokrát hrály různé hry, které měly velký vliv na jejich osobnost i formulování různých strategií, jak uniknout případnému výprasku od otrokáře. Mimo jiné se i některé z nich naučily během her abecedu či počítat. Hry častokrát reflektovaly život v otroctví. Při různých hrách se děti například pokoušeli utíkat a schovat před jedním vybraným dítětem, které se snažilo ostatní pochyťat a najít. Během jiné hry hledaly schovaný předmět a kdokoliv ho našel, snažil se ostatní dohonit a uhodit je. Děti si také hrály na otrokáře, jejich manželky, napodobovaly své rodinné příslušníky nebo si hrály na obchodníky s otroky.

Čím více rostly, tím více se očekávalo, že brzy začnou pracovat. Během dospívání si postupně začaly všímat, že jejich život a status není zcela běžný v porovnání s otrokářem či jeho rodinou. Začaly si mnohem více uvědomovat, že i ony jsou otroci stejně tak jako jejich rodiče, prarodiče a sourozenci. Nedají se vyvodit obecnější závěry o tom, kdy přesně a jak přišly na to, že jsou otroci. U každého z nich to bylo individuální – některým to řekli rodiče či ostatní členové rodiny, jiné na to přišly samy. Například když viděly, jak otrokáři bezdůvodně a násilně trestali své otroky. Pro děti toto zjištění určitě nebylo jednoduché a vedlo spíše ke znepokojení a strachu z jejich budoucnosti.

Okolo pátého roku jejich života se pomalu očekávalo, že začnou pomáhat s lehčí prací. Děti tedy vypomáhaly na plantážích a polích, pomáhaly s domácími pracemi v domě jejich otrokáře, popřípadě pomáhaly otrokáři či jeho manželce, kdykoliv to bylo potřeba. Mohly být také požádány, aby nosily vodu nebo jídlo na pole či svolávali ostatní otroky k večeři. Přesto

všechno tato práce nepřinesla malým dětem žádné benefity, ale namísto toho radost otrokáři a starosti rodičům. Čím více děti prokazovaly, že jsou schopné práce, tím více se mohly otrokáři radovat z mladé a sílu schopné nové pracovní síly. Naopak rodiče měli mnohem více strach, protože to častokrát znamenalo, že mohou být jejich děti kdykoliv prodány.

Jakmile se dítě stalo adolescentem, bylo považováno, že už je dostatečně veliké na to, aby mohlo začít samostatně pracovat jako ostatní. Některé děti se dokonce rozhodly samy, že chtějí, co nejdříve začít pracovat, neboť jim práce zaručovala, že dostanou pořádné oblečení a přiděl jídla. Malé děti, které nepracovaly, obvykle dostávaly jenom jedno oblečení na celý rok a častokrát neměly ani boty a vlastní peřinu. A protože nepracovaly, dostávaly pouze kukuřičné kaše a trochu slaniny. Zatímco adolescenti, kteří pracovali, dostali větší přiděl jídla, oblečení na léto a zimu a častokrát i vlastní peřinu. Ti také většinou začali pracovat na polích a plantážích anebo pokračovali v domácích pracích, vařili, prali či uklízeli pro otrokáře a jeho rodinu. Pokud bylo potřeba, aby uměli nějakou konkrétní dovednost, naučili se ji od rodičů, ostatních otroků nebo byli výjimečně posíláni do škol.

Jak děti vyrůstaly, byl jim velmi často odepírán přístup ke vzdělání, neboť se otrokáři poměrně ve velkém shodovali, že poskytnutí vzdělání otrokům je velmi nebezpečné a může to být otočeno proti nim. Ve výjimečných případech jim bylo dovoleno naučit se číst, aby mohli být i ve svém volném čase zbožni a mohli si číst Bibli. Samotní rodiče také častokrát vzdělání dětí nepodporovali a raději se je snažili naučit dobrému vychování, zvykům, víře v Boha či jim vyprávěli o historii a tradicích africké kultury. Přesto se některé děti za každou cenu chtěly naučit číst a psát a byly ochotné pro to udělat cokoliv.

Jedním z možných způsobů, jak dosáhnout vzdělání, bylo poprosit jiného otroka či bílého kamaráda, o kterém věděly, že už umí číst i psát, aby je to také naučil. V jiném případě, pokud pracovaly v domě otrokáře, který měl děti, snažily se potají dávat pozor, když se jejich děti učily a poté se snažily celý proces napodobit. V obou případech, riskovaly trest, pokud se to otrokář či jeho manželka dozvěděli. A pakliže se dítě neučilo samo, ale učil ho jiný otrok či otrokářské dítě, hrozil trest a častokrát i uvěznění oběma. Otrokáři totiž věřili, že to bylo proti zákonné a byli toho názoru, že jediné povinnosti jejich otroků byly poslušnost a pracovitost.

Otroctví bylo praktikováno až do první poloviny 19. století a otroci byli osvobozeni až po skončení občanské války. Před občanskou válkou začalo získávat na popularitě abolicionistické hnutí, které bylo doprovázeno vyprávěními uprchlých otroků. Tyto vyprávění se snažila poukázat na těžkosti a rozdíly otroků a bílých lidí. Přestože se několika z nich povedlo uprchnout ještě před samotnou válkou, jejich život byl navždy poznamenán otroctvím, stejně tak jako životy, těch, kteří byli osvobozeni až po občanské válce. Život v otroctví nebyl pro

nikoho snadný a jeho fyzické i psychické následky a častá rozdělení černošských rodin provázela tyto bývalé otroky až do konce jejich života.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baker, Georgia. In *Bullwhip Days: The Slaves Remembered*. Edited by James Mellon. New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Brown, John. *Slave Life in Georgia: A Narrative of the Life, Sufferings, and Escape of John Brown, a Fugitive Slave, Now in England*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2001.
<https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/jbrown/jbrown.html>.

Bubíková, Šárka. “We Were But Property – Not a Mother, and the Children God Had Given Her:” The Figure of a Child in Abolitionist Literature. *American and British Studies Annual* 7 (2014): 38–47.

Butterfield, Stephen T. “The Use of language in the Slaves Narratives.” *Negro American Literature Forum*, Vol 6. No. 3 (Autumn, 1972): 72–78.
<https://jstor.org/stable/3041084>.

Casmier-Paz, Lynn A. “Slave Narratives and the Rhetoric of Author Portaiture.” *New Literary History*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Winter, 2003): 91–116.
<https://jstor.org/stable/20057767>.

Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American slave*. New York: Penguin Books, 1982.

Dunaway, Wilma A. *The African-American Family in Slavery and Emancipation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Encyclopedia.com. “African American Leisure Lifestyles.” Accessed March 12, 2019,
<https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/african-american-leisure-lifestyles>.

Encyclopedia Britannica. “Slave Narrative.” Accessed January 29, 2019,
<https://academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/slave-narrative/68166>.

Encyclopedia Virginia. "Slave Clothing and Adornment in Virginia." Accessed March 12, 2019, https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Slave_Clothing_and_Adornment_in_Virginia.

Encyclopedia Virginia. "Slave Housing in Virginia." Accessed March 10, 2019, https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Slave_Housing_in_Virginia.

Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth. *Within the Plantation Household*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina press, 1988.

Franklin, John Hope. *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*, 7th edition. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994.

George Washington's Mount Vernon. "Slave Quarters." Accessed March 11, 2019, <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/slave-quarters/>.

History. "Frederick Douglass." Accessed February 9, 2019, <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/frederick-douglass>.

Illick, Joseph E. *American Childhoods*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002.

Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. New York: Norton, 2001.

King, Wilma. *Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth-Century America*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997.

Křížová, Markéta. *Otroctví v Novém světě od 15. do 19. století*. Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2013.

Mintz, Steven. *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood*. The United States of America: Belknap Press, 2006.
https://archive.org/details/hucksraffthistory00mint_0.

Morgan, Winifred. "Gender-Related Differences in the Slave Narratives of Harriet Jacobs and Frederick Douglass." *American Studies* 35, no. 2 (1994): 73–94.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40642688>.

National Archives. "Transcript of the Proclamation." Accessed January 29, 2019,
<https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured-documents/emancipation-proclamation/transcript.html>.

NCPedia. "Harriet Jacobs." Accessed February 9, 2019,
<https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/jacobs-harriet>.

Norton, Mary Beth, David M. Katzman, Paul D. Escott, Howard P. Chudacoff, Thomas G. Paterson, and William M. Tuttle Jr. *A people and a Nation: History of the United States*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1986.

Olney, James. "'I Was Born': Slave Narratives, Their Status as Autobiography and as Literature." *Callaloo*, No. 20 (Winter, 1984): 46–73.
<https://jstor.org/stable/2930678>.

Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature. "Autobiography: Slave narratives." Accessed January 29, 2019,
<http://oxfordre.com/literature/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.001.0001/acrefore-9780190201098-e-658>.

Schneider, Dorothy and Carl J. Schneider. *Slavery in America*. New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007.

Schwartz, Marie Jenkins. *Born in Bondage: Growing Up Enslaved in the Antebellum South*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.
<https://archive.org/details/borninbondagegro00schw>.

Stampp, Kenneth M. *The Peculiar institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South*. New York: Vintage Books, 1956.

Stevenson, Brenda E. *Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Wiggins, David K. "The Play of Slave Children in the Plantation Communities of the Old South, 1820-1860." In *Growing Up in America: Children in Historical Perspective*, edited by Ray N. Hiner and Joseph M. Hawes, 173–190. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985.