

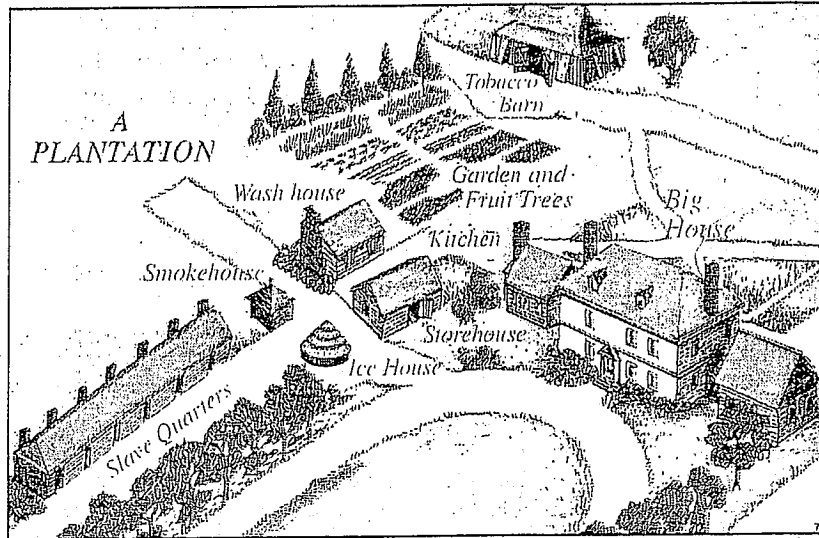
## SLAVE NARRATIVE #3:

CARTER (1)

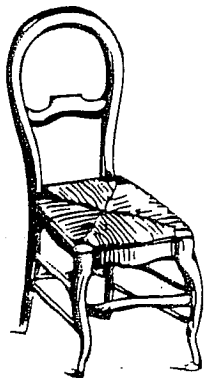
SLAVERY

You are Carter, born on a Maryland tobacco plantation in 1839, one of fifteen children. Both of your parents were slaves working on the plantation. Being the child of slaves automatically made you a slave. Slave owners encouraged their slaves to create families. It meant that the owner would have more slaves, much like raising cattle or sheep.

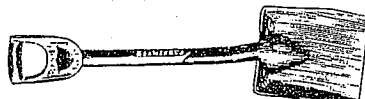
All the white folk in the south knew that the best way to get a good house servant was to raise one. Your master and his wife already had two children and would soon be expecting another. The need for another house servant was obvious. So, at age 4, you were taken from your parents to sleep as well as to eat, work, and play in the Big House. You lived in the master's house with his family, but your position was made clear. You were still a slave.



In many ways, being taken into the Big House was good. You definitely ate better and had better clothing than the children who worked in the field. Your working conditions were much more comfortable as well. On the other hand, you lost almost all contact with your family. You were only allowed visits with them on Sundays and those visits only lasted a few short hours. As a very young child, your work in the Big House was light at first. You helped the older servants clean, cook, and tend the gardens. You were also a kind of "living doll" for your master's daughters, ages six and eight. They dressed you up and had you serve tea at their tea parties, had you dance and put on shows for them, or hit you when they pretended that you were bad. In the Big House, you were on call twenty-four hours a day. You never had a moment completely to yourself. Anytime, night or day, you were called upon to empty a bed pan, clean up a mess, or fetch something for your master's family. And you were in just as much danger of being beaten as any farm hand. In the Big House as well as in the field, discipline was immediate and often cruel.



Your mistress's instruments of pain were widely varied. She used the raw hide or a bunch of hickory-sprouts tied together, sometimes seasoned in the fire. If these were not immediately available, she might use a chair, a broom, a spoon, her shoe, or a shovel. An instrument of torture you remember the most was an old oak club, a foot and a half in length, and an inch and a half square. With this particular instrument you were beaten on the hands or feet until you were blistered. Many nights you awoke from nightmares of the club.





## SLAVE NARRATIVE #3: CARTER (2)

### SLAVERY

At nine years old, you were taught to care for the mules and horses. This new work was a welcome change. You were able to leave the house more often and you also learned to ride. But you soon realized that this new occupation required more from you than you expected. It was not long before you were put on the back of a horse and were immediately thrown off. When you stood up you saw the **groom** (a white man the master had hired to train the horses) standing there with a **switch** in his hand. At once he started to beat you. This was the first time that you had been beaten by anyone other than your mistress, so you yelled at him, "Wait till my mistress gets hold of you!"

You ran as fast as you could to the Big House and found the mistress. Your hopes were shattered when she told you to go back to your work and be a good boy, that she could do nothing for you. But that did not satisfy you, so you went to your mother in the slave quarters that night. Your mother went to the groom to talk to him. The groom took out a whip and started to beat your mother. You ran back and forth between the two of them until he stopped beating her. He then took you back to the stable and gave you another, more severe, beating.

It was then that you realized that you, along with all the other slaves, were doomed to this cruel treatment. A few days later the groom saw you and called to you to go get him a **switch** (a small branch from a tree), which you did. He then gave you a first-class **flogging** with it. That Sunday you told your mother that the groom was whipping you too much now, and, that you were going to do something about it. Your mother told you that you must not do anything because if you did, he would come after your family. She told you to go back and do your work as best you could and not to say or do anything. You cried that you did not know what you had done wrong to deserve the whipping. He just called you to him and whipped you for no reason. Your father said that they could do nothing except pray, pray that a time would soon come when your suffering would end.

Their prayers were answered the next week. The groom had once again beaten you across your bare back. This time you lost a lot of blood and your wounds were so deep that they did not heal quickly. They became infected and you died three days later, at age 10.

### Questions

Together with your small group, prepare the answers to the following questions, using the information provided within this narrative. These questions will be used during the talk show.

1. How did you become a slave?
2. What is a house boy and how did you become one?
3. What were your jobs in the Big House?
4. Were you ever punished?
5. Did you always work as a house boy?
6. Was it easier working in the stables?
7. Did you ever think about getting back at the groom?
8. How did you die?