slaveholders with little bits of children on a horse, whom they were taking from home to sell—children not more than three or four years old. They want a little money, & take a baby off & get one or two hundred dollars for him.

3. Dr. Esther Hill Hawks Recounts the Rape of "Susan Black," 1865

I have in school a woman of this name whose history has greatly interested me. She is about thirty six years of age, quite black, but with good features, bright and intelligent. She was born of pure African parents and has always lived in one family, to whom she is still greatly attached. The first notice taken of her, which she remembers, by her old master, was when she was about twelve yrs old. One day he called her to go into the shed with him—saying jocosely that he was afraid, but his eldest daughter hearing it said to Susan "You keep away from Pa don't go in there", however, he called again soon, and she went after him. Where he caught hold of her, held her and in spite of her frightened resistance—with his handkerchief stuffed in her mouth, committed rape on such a child. She was sick for three weeks after. On her recovery he used her as he liked. When about thirteen she gave birth to a son. She wasn't going to nurse her or care for it and it was placed in the hands of her sister to bring up. This is the only child which she has ever had which greatly enraged her master and he whipped her several times, saying that she destroyed her children and he liked the breed to well "to allow it to run out."

He had daughters older than she and when one of them married, Susan was a part of the marriage parties. Susan lived quite happily with her young mistress, married a fellow-slave, had a "real wedding" in church as she expressed it, and until the breaking out of the rebellion had no serious troubles. Her husbands master was quite indulgent to him, and gave him many privileges, so one night when out fishing with two others, the temptation to go out to see the Yankees was too great to be overcome—and he went; Susan, meanwhile was living in the country. Her Master, now Maj. Henry Rivers [C.S.A.], on learning that her husband had gone, undertook to console her by offering her joint stock, in his affections with his wife. Tried entreaties, money, which she threw in his face, and lastly whippings and threats. Susan would tell her mistress of her persecutions, fearing to make her unhappy so poor Susan bore in silence his abuses, till one day, after exhausting all his powers to make her yield to his desires, he had her stripped naked, tied up and then with his own hands beat her 'till the fever of passion had subsided. Susan said he would take particular pains to beat her over the pubis; until she was terribly swollen and the blood run down her legs and stood in pools on the floor. She showed me her body and limbs and they are now covered with frightful white scars. As soon as she was sufficiently recovered she resolved to endeavor to make her escape and if possible join her husband somewhere. She succeeded in reaching this City and was secreted in a small room, by her father, great search was made for her—but she remained in security—twice dressed in boys clothes, she attempted to cross the water to Morris Is. but was frightened back. This was about two months before the fall of Pt. Wagner [Wagner]—and from that time 'till the occupation of this place by our troops, she was confined to one small room, only daring to venture out in the evening. When our soldiers marched into the city Susan was wild with delight—which she hardly knew how to express. As the troops marched through the street, coming opposite to her she pulled off [off] her shawl and spread it down for them to walk on. The officers gallantly stepped aside and raised their hats in recognition of her delicate compliment—Susan's husband came over to Port Royal and enlisted in the 1st S.C. Regt. was a good soldier, got disabled was discharged and came back here with the "Yankee soldiers" to find his wife, which he was not long in doing and they are now living here as quietly and happily as though they had only lived proxy ordinary lives like other people.

4. Harriet Jacobs Relates Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, 1861

I now entered on my fifteenth year—a sad epoch in the life of a slave girl. My master [Dr. Flint] began to whisper foul words in my ear. Young as I was, I could not remain ignorant of their import. I tried to treat them with indifference or contempt. The master's age, my extreme youth, and the fear that his conduct would be reported to my grandmother, made him bear this treatment for many months. He was a crafty man, and resorted to many means to accomplish his purposes. Sometimes he had stormy, terrific ways, that made his victims tremble; sometimes he assumed a gentleness that he thought must surely subdue. Of the two, I preferred his stormy moods, although they left me trembling. He tried his utmost to corrupt the pure principles my grandmother had instilled. He peopled my young mind with unclean images, such as only a vile monster could think of. I turned from him with disgust and hatred. But he was my master. I was compelled to live under the same roof with him—where I saw a man forty years my senior daily violating the most sacred commandments of nature. He told me I was his property; that I must be subject to his will in all things. My soul revolted against the mean tyranny. But where could I turn for protection? No matter whether the slave girl be as black as ebony or as fair as her mistress. In either case, there is no shadow of law to protect her from insult, from violence, or even from death; all these are inflicted by friends who bear the shape of men. The mistress, who ought to protect the helpless victim, has no other feelings towards her but those of jealousy and rage. The degradation, the wrongs, the vices, that grow out of slavery, are more than I can describe. They are greater than you would willingly believe. Surely, if you credited one half the truths that are told you concerning the helpless millions suffering in this cruel bondage, you at the north would not help to tighten the yoke. You surely would refuse to do for the master, on your own soil, the mean and cruel work which trained bloodhounds and the lowest class of whites do for him at the south.

I longed for some one to confide in. I would have given the world to have laid my head on my grandmother's faithful bosom, and told her all my troubles. But Dr. Flint swore he would kill me, if I was not as silent as the grave. Then, although my

grandmother was all in all to me, I feared her as well as loved her. I had been accustomed to look to her with a respect bordering upon awe. I was very young, and felt shame-faced about telling her such impure things, especially as I knew her to be very strict on such subjects. Moreover, she was a woman of a high spirit. She was usually very quiet in her demeanor; but if her indignation was once roused, it was not very easily quelled. I had been told that she once chased a white gentleman with a loaded pistol, because he insulted one of her daughters. I dreaded the consequences of a violent outbreak; and both pride and fear kept me silent. But though I did not confide in my grandmother, and even evaded her vigilant watchfulness and inquiry, her presence in the neighborhood was some protection to me. Though she had been a slave, Dr. Flint was afraid of her. He dreaded her scorching rebukes. Moreover, she was known and patronized by many people; and he did not wish to have his villainy made public. It was lucky for me that I did not live on a distant plantation, but in a town not so large that the inhabitants were ignorant of each other’s affairs. Bad as are the laws and customs in a slaveholding community, the doctor, as a professional man, deemed it prudent to keep up some outward show of decency.

The Jealous Mistress

Mrs. Flint possessed the key to her husband’s character before I was born. She might have used this knowledge to counsel and to screen the young and the innocent among her slaves; but for them she had no sympathy. They were the objects of her constant suspicion and malevolence. She watched her husband with uncasing vigilance; but he was well practised in means to evade it.

After repeated quarrels between the doctor and his wife, he announced his intention to take his youngest daughter, then four years old, to sleep in his apartment. It was necessary that a servant should sleep in the same room, to be on hand if the child stirred. I was selected for that office, and informed for what purpose that arrangement had been made. The first night the doctor had the little child in his room alone. The next morning, I was ordered to take my station as nurse the following night. A kind providence interposed in my favor. During the day Mrs. Flint heard of this new arrangement, and a storm followed. I rejoiced to hear it rage.

After a while my mistress sent for me to come to her room. Her first question was, “Did you know you were to sleep in the doctor’s room?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Who told you?”

“My master.”

“Will you answer truly all the questions I ask?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Tell me, then, as you hope to be forgiven, are you innocent of what I have accused you?”

“I am.”

She handed me a Bible, and said, “Lay your hand on your heart, kiss this holy book, and swear before God that you tell me the truth.”

I took the oath she required, and I did it with a clear conscience.

“You have taken God’s holy word to testify your innocence,” said she. “If you have deceived me, beware! Now take this stool, sit down, look me directly in the face, and tell me all that has passed between your master and you.”

I did as she ordered. As I went on with my account her color changed frequently, she wept, and sometimes groaned. She spoke in tones so sad, that I was touched by her grief. The tears came to my eyes; but I was soon convinced that her emotions arose from anger and wounded pride. She felt that her marriage vows were desecrated, her dignity insulted; but she had no compassion for the poor victim of her husband’s perfidy. She pitied herself as a martyr; but she was incapable of feeling for the condition of shame and misery in which her unfortunate, helpless slave was placed.

The Lover

Why does the slave ever love? Why allow the tendrils of the heart to twine around objects which may at any moment be wrenched away by the hand of violence?

There was in the neighborhood a young colored carpenter: a free born man. We had been well acquainted in childhood, and frequently met together afterwards. We became mutually attached, and he proposed to marry me. I loved him with all the ardor of a young girl’s first love. But when I reflected that I was a slave, and that the laws gave no sanction to the marriage of such, my heart sank within me. My lover wanted to buy me; but I knew that Dr. Flint was too wilful and arbitrary a man to consent to that arrangement. From him, I was sure of experiencing all sorts of opposition, and I had nothing to hope from my mistress. She would have been delighted to have got rid of me, but not in that way. It would have relieved her mind of a burden if she could have seen me sold to some distant state, but if I was married near home I should be just as much in her husband’s power as I had previously been,—for the husband of a slave has no power to protect her. Moreover, my mistress, like many others, seemed to think that slaves had no right to any family ties of their own, that they were created merely to wait upon the family of the mistress. I once heard her abuse a young slave girl, who told her that a colored man wanted to make her his wife. “I will have you pecked 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?” The girl to whom she said this had a mulatto child, of course not acknowledged by its father. The poor black man who loved her would have been proud to acknowledge his helpless offspring.

Many and anxious were the thoughts I revolved in my mind. I was at a loss what to do. Above all things, I was desirous to spare my lover the insults that had cut so deeply into my soul. I talked with my grandmother about it, and partly told her my fears. I did not dare to tell her the worst. She had long suspected all was not right, and I confirmed her suspicions. I knew a storm would rise that would prove the overthrow of all my hopes.

This love-dream had been my support through many trials; and I could not bear to run the risk of having it suddenly dissipated. There was a lady in the neighborhood, a particular friend of Dr. Flint’s, who often visited the house. I had a great respect for her, and she had always manifested a friendly interest in me. The lady listened with kindly sympathy, and promised to do her utmost to promote my wishes. She had an interview with the doctor, and I believe she pleaded my cause earnestly; but it was all to no purpose.

How I dreaded my master now! Every minute I expected to be summoned to his presence; but the day passed, and I heard nothing from him. The next morning,
a message was brought to me: "Master wants you in his study." I found the door ajar, and I stood a moment gazing at the hateful man who claimed a right to rule me, body and soul. I entered, and tried to appear calm. I did not want him to know my heart was bleeding. He looked fixedly at me, with an expression which seemed to say, "I have half a mind to kill you on the spot." At last he broke the silence, and that was a relief to both of us.

"So you want to be married, do you?" said he, "and to a free nigger."

"Yes, sir."

"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."

What a situation I should be in, as the wife of one of his slaves, even if my heart had been interested!

I replied, "Don't you suppose, sir, that a slave can have some preference about marrying? Do you suppose that all men are alike to her?"

"Do you love this nigger?" said he, abruptly.

"Yes, sir."

"How dare you tell me so!" he exclaimed, in great wrath. After a slight pause, he added, "I supposed you thought more of yourself; that you felt above the insults of such puppies."

I replied, "If he is a puppy I am a puppy, for we are both of the negro race. It is right and honorable for us to love each other. The man you call a puppy never insulted me, sir; and he would not love me if he did not believe me to be a virtuous woman."

He sprang upon me like a tiger, and gave me a stunning blow. It was the first time he had ever struck me; and fear did not enable me to control my anger. When I had recovered a little from the effects, I exclaimed, "You have struck me for answering you honestly. How I despise you!"

A Perilous Passage in the Slave Girl's Life

After my lover went away, Dr. Flint contrived a new plan. He seemed to have an idea that my fear of my mistress was his greatest obstacle. In the blondest tones, he told me that he was going to build a small house for me, in a secluded place, four miles away from the town. I shuddered; but I was constrained to listen, while he talked of his intention to give me a home of my own, and to make a lady of me. Hitherto, I had escaped my dreaded fate, by being in the midst of people. . .

And now, reader, I come to a period in my unhappy life, which I would gladly forget if I could. The remembrance fills me with sorrow and shame. It pains me to tell you of it; but I have promised to tell you the truth, and I will do it honestly, let it cost me what it may. I will not try to screen myself behind the plea of compulsion from a master; for it was not so. Neither can I plead ignorance or thoughtlessness. For years, my master had done his utmost to pollute my mind with foul images, and to destroy the pure principles inculcated by my grandmother, and the good mistress of my childhood. The influences of slavery had had the same effect on me that they had on other young girls; they had made me prematurely knowing, concerning the evil ways of the world. I knew what I did, and I did it with deliberate calculation.

But, O, ye happy women, whose purity has been sheltered from childhood, who have been free to choose the objects of your affection, whose homes are protected by law, do not judge the poor desolate slave girl too severely! If slavery had been abolished, I, also, could have married the man of my choice; I could have had a home shielded by the laws; and I should have been spared the painful task of confessing what I am now about to relate; but all my prospects had been blighted by slavery. I wanted to keep myself pure; and, under the most adverse circumstances, I tried hard to preserve my self-respect; but I was struggling alone in the powerful grasp of the demon Slavery; and the monster proved too strong for me. I felt as if I was forsaken by God and man; as if all my efforts must be frustrated; and I became reckless in my despair.

I have told you that Dr. Flint's persecutions and his wife's jealousy had given rise to some gossip in the neighborhood. Among others, it chanced that a white unmarried gentleman had obtained some knowledge of the circumstances in which I was placed. He knew my grandmother, and often spoke to me in the street. He became interested in me, and asked questions about my master, which I answered in part. He expressed a great deal of sympathy, and a wish to aid me. He constantly sought opportunities to see me, and wrote to me frequently. I was a poor slave girl, only fifteen years old.

So much attention from a superior person was, of course, flattering; for human nature is the same in all. I also felt grateful for his sympathy, and encouraged by his kind words. It seemed to me a great thing to have such a friend. By degrees, a more tender feeling crept into my heart. He was an educated and eloquent gentleman; too eloquent, alas, for the poor slave girl who trusted in him. Of course I saw all this was tending. I knew the impassable gulf between us; but to be an object of interest to a man who is not married, and who is not her master, is agreeable to the pride and feelings of a slave, if her miserable situation has left her any pride or sentiment. It seems less degrading to give one's self, than to submit to compulsion. There is something akin to freedom in having a lover who has no control over you, except that which he gains by kindness and attachment. A master may treat you as rudely as he pleases, and you dare not speak; moreover, the wrong does not seem so great with an unmarried man, as with one who has a wife to be made unhappy. There may be sophistry in all this; but the condition of a slave confuses all principles of morality, and, in fact, renders the practice of them impossible.

When I found that my master had actually begun to build the lonely cottage, other feelings mixed with those I have described. Revenge, and calculations of interest, were added to flattered vanity and sincere gratitude for kindness. I knew nothing would enrage Dr. Flint so much as to know that I favored another; and it was something to triumph over my tyrant even in that small way. I thought he would revenge himself by selling me, and I was sure my friend, Mr. Sands, would buy me. He was a man of more generosity and feeling than my master, and I thought my freedom could be easily obtained from him. The crisis of my fate now came so near that I was desperate. I shuddered to think of being the mother of children that should be owned by my old tyrant. I knew that as soon as a new fancy took him, his victims were sold far off to get rid of them; especially if they had children. I had seen several women sold, with their babies at the breast. He never allowed his offspring by slaves to remain long in sight of himself and his wife. Of a man who was not my
master I could ask to have my children well supported; and in this case, I felt confident I should obtain the boon. I also felt quite sure that they would be made free. With all these thoughts revolving in my mind, and seeing no other way of escaping the doom I so much dreaded, I made a headlong plunge. Pity me, and pardon me, O virtuous reader! You never knew what it is to be a slave; to be entirely unprotected by law or custom; to have the laws reduce you to the condition of a chattel, entirely subject to the will of another. You never exhausted your ingenuity in avoiding the snares, and eluding the power of a hated tyrant; you never shuddered at the sound of his footsteps, and trembled within hearing of his voice. I know I did wrong. No one can feel it more sensibly than I do. The painful and humiliating memory will haunt me to my dying day. Still, in looking back, calmly, on the events of my life, I feel that the slave woman ought not to be judged by the same standard as others.

The months passed on. I had many unhappy hours. I secretly mourned over the sorrow I was bringing on my grandmother, who had so tried to shield me from harm. I knew that I was the greatest comfort of her old age, and that it would be a source of pride to her that I had not degraded myself, like most of the slaves. I wanted to confess to her that I was no longer worthy of her love; but I could not utter the dreaded words.

As for Dr. Flint, I had a feeling of satisfaction and triumph in the thought of telling him. From time to time he told me of his intended arrangements, and I was silent. At last, he came and told me the cottage was completed, and ordered me to go to it. I told him I would never enter it. He said, "I have heard enough of such talk as that. You shall go, if you are carried by force; and you shall remain there."

I replied, "I will never go there. In a few months I shall be a mother."

He stood and looked at me in dumb amazement, and left the house without a word. I thought I should be happy in my triumph over him. But now that the truth was out, and my relatives would hear of it, I felt wretched. Humble as were their circumstances, they had pride in my good character. Now, how could I look them in the face? My self-respect was gone! I had resolved that I would be virtuous, though I was a slave. I had said, "Let the storm beat! I will brave it till I die." And now, how humiliated I felt!

5. Chaplain A. B. Randall Writes About the Freedpeople’s Ideal of Marriage, 1865

Little Rock Ark Feb 28th 1865

To Brig. Gen. L. Thomas

Weddings, just now, are very popular, and abundant among the Colored People. They have just learned, of the Special Order No. 15 of Gen Thomas by which, they may not only be lawfully married, but have their Marriage Certificates, Recorded; in a book furnished by the Government. This is most desirable; and the order, was very opportune; as these people were constantly losing their certificates. Those who were captured from the “Chepewa”; at Ivy’s Ford, on the 17th of January, by Col Brooks, had their Marriage Certificates, taken from them; and destroyed; and then were roundly cursed, for having such papers in their possession. I have married, during the month, at this Post; Twenty five couples; mostly, those, who have families; & have been living together for years. I try to dissuade single men, who are soldiers, from marrying, till their time of enlistment is out: as course seems to me, to be most judicious.

The Colored People here, generally consider, this war not only; their exodus, from bondage; but the road, to Responsibility; Competency; and an honorable Citizenship—God grant that their hopes and expectations may be fully realized. Most respectfully

[Chaplain] A. B. Randall

6. William H. Stallings Testifies About Ku Klux Klan Lynching, 1871

Atlanta, Georgia, November 6, 1871.

WILLIAM H. STALLINGS sworn and examined.

By the CHAIRMAN:

Question. State your age, where you were born, where you now live, and what is your present occupation.

Answer: I am thirty-eight years old. I was born in the city of Augusta, in this State, and now live there; I am a carpenter by trade—a mechanic.

Question. We have had a great deal of testimony, it is proper to say, before us with respect to certain disguised bands of men going about at night and committing various acts of lawlessness. State whether there are any such in your community, and what you know about them there, of your own knowledge or upon reliable information?

Answer: I have never heard of any in the county of Richmond to my recollection. I think that in 1864 or 1865—I paid very little attention to it at the time—at a station called Dearing, on the Georgia road, between here and Augusta, about one or two hundred yards this side of the station, is what is called the water-pump or tank. One night while we were stopping at that station getting wood and water, two men came through the car I was in; they looked to me as if they had their coats turned wrong side outwards, with red flannel linings, and their faces blocked or smutted; they ran through the car and went out. About a couple of minutes afterwards, about two miles this side of Barnett, I saw on the side of the railroad embankment a row of men, twenty-five or thirty, maybe forty, I could not count them as the train was going by, they were all dressed in white; they raised their hands, and I heard them make a noise, but I could not hear what they said; that was all I ever saw of them. There was so much of it going on through the country at the time that I did not pay much attention to it.