

## KAS RADIO - Episode 4

### Slavery in Kentucky A Think History Radio Spot

#### Episode Transcript



*Enslaved men, like this Waynesville, North Carolina man, were tradesmen skilled in carpentry, masonry, brick making, and horse training. Enslaved women, like this enslaved Abington, Virginia hotel chambermaid, were seamstresses, cooks, herbalists, and midwives.*

*Kentucky plantation owners, on occasion, leased out individuals with these skills to other farms and plantations. Some slaveholders also paid enslaved laborers when they surpassed their daily work quotas.*

*of the family. ... our life [was not] an easy one, in the hours of our toil or in the amount of labor performed. We were always required to sit up until all the family had retired; then we must be up at early dawn in summer, and before day in winter.”* The words of Lewis Clarke.

Since Kentucky’s enslaved people often did not work exclusively in the fields, people today have the impression that slavery here was somehow “milder” than slavery in the Deep South.

Make no mistake: enslaved people in Kentucky suffered the same insults, the same abuse, and the same mental, emotional, and physical hardships as all people who live in slavery.

Lewis Clarke, an enslaved man in Madison County, was one of four “house slaves.” He described his childhood experience of Kentucky’s so-called milder form of slavery this way:

*“...though we had not, in all respects, so hard work as the field hands, yet in many things our condition was much worse.*

*We were constantly exposed to the whims and passions of every member*

#### To Read More

**A History of Blacks in Kentucky, Vol. 1, From Slavery to Segregation, 1760-1891,** by Marion B. Lucas (1992). Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort.

*Traces the role of Blacks from the early exploration and settlement of Kentucky to 1891, when African Americans gained freedom only to be faced with a segregated society. Extensive use of primary sources: slave diaries, Freedmen’s Bureau records, church minutes, personal papers.*

**January's Sparrow** by Patricia Polacco (2009). Philomel Books/Penguin Random House, New York. Children's fiction book for ages 8-12/3-7th grade.

*In the middle of the night, the Crosswhites must flee the Kentucky plantation where they work - January has been beaten and killed by the plantation master, and they fear who may be next. Sadie must leave behind the wooden sparrow carved for her by January. Through the Underground Railroad, the Crosswhites make their way to Michigan and freedom.*

**Kentucky Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery in Kentucky from Interviews with Former Slaves (1936-1938)**, by the

Federal Writers' Project, Works Progress Administration (2006). Library of Congress, Applewood Books, Bedford, MA.

*First-person accounts of slavery and 500 black-and-white photographs of former slaves collected in the 1930s as part of the Federal Writers' Project (FWP) of the Works Progress Administration, later renamed Work Projects Administration (WPA).*

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Antebellum lithograph images used courtesy of Wilma A. Dunaway, Slavery and Emancipation in the Mountain South: Sources, Evidence, and Methods, Virginia Tech, Online Archives, illustrations 9.3 and 1.3, respectively ([https://scholar.lib.vt.edu/faculty\\_archives/mountain\\_slavery/antebell.htm](https://scholar.lib.vt.edu/faculty_archives/mountain_slavery/antebell.htm)).

To learn more about **Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938**, go to <https://www.loc.gov/collections/slave-narratives-from-the-federal-writers-project-1936-to-1938/about-this-collection/>. Find the Kentucky Slave Narratives in Volume 7 here: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/mesn.070/?st=gallery>

**Narrative of the Sufferings of Lewis Clarke, During a Captivity of More Than Twenty-Five Years, Among the Algerines of Kentucky, One of the So Called Christian States of America, Dictated by Himself**, by Lewis Garrard Clarke (1845). David H. Ela, Printer, Boston, MA. Electronic Edition (1999), Academic Affairs Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill. (<https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/clarke/clarke.html>).

*Originally published in 1845, this was the first narrative to be copyrighted by a slave. Lewis Clarke, born in 1815 in Madison County, Kentucky, dictated his story to the abolitionist J. C. Lovejoy. It directly inspired Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel Uncle Tom's Cabin.*

"There We Were in Darkness - Here We Are in Light": Kentucky Slaves and the Promised Land by Karolyn E. Smardz (1999), pages 242-258 in **The Buzzel About Kentuck: Settling the Promised Land**, edited by Craig Thompson Friend. University Press of Kentucky, Lexington.

*Thornton Blackburn was a "hired-out" enslaved man in Louisville, Kentucky. When the opportunity arose, he and his wife Lucie fled to Toronto, Canada. In the years to come, they helped other Kentucky runaways.*

**The Strength of These Arms** by Raymond Bial (2000). HMH Books for Young Readers/ HoughtonMifflinHarcourt, Boston. Children's nonfiction book for ages 10-13/5-8th grade.

*The everyday life of plantation slaves is detailed in text and haunting photographs of recently excavated plantation sites, giving immediacy to the lives of enslaved Africans while paying tribute to the daily courage of a people who endured against all odds.*

**Uncovering the Lives of Kentucky's Enslaved People** by M. Jay Stottman and Lori C. Stahlgren (2017). Heritage Spotlight 5, Kentucky Archaeological Survey, Lexington. <https://www.kentuckyarchaeologicalsurvey.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Spotlight-No.5-Uncovering-the-Lives-of-Kentuckys-Enslaved-People.pdf>

*Summarizes archaeological research carried out at a typical early to late nineteenth century Kentucky plantation in central Kentucky. Focuses on the lifeways of the enslaved Blacks who lived and worked there.*



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