

**WPA in Ohio  
Federal Writers' Project  
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Topic: Ex-Slaves  
Jefferson County, District #2**

**MRS. CATHERINE SLIM  
Ex-slave, 87 years,  
939 N. 6th St., Steubenville**

I wuz born in Rockingham, Virginy; a beautiful place where I cum from. My age is en de courthouse, Harrisonburg, Virginy. I dunno de date of my birth, our massa's wouldn't tell us our age.

My mother's name wuz Sally. She wuz a colored woman and she died when I wuz a little infant. I don't remember her. She had four chillun by my father who wuz a white man. His name wuz Jack Rose. He made caskets for de dead people.

My mother had six chillun altogether. De name of de four by my father wuz, Frances de oldest sister, Sarah wuz next, den Mary. I am de baby, all three are dead cept me. I am very last one livin'.

I had two half-brudders, dey were slaves too, John and Berwin. Berwin wuz drowned in W. Va. He wuz bound out to Hamsburger and drowned just after he got free. Dey did not sold infant slaves. Den dey bound out by de court. John got free and went to Liberia and died after he got there. He wuz my oldest brudder.

I wuz bound out by de court to Marse Barley and Miss Sally. I had to git up fore daylight and look at de clock wid de candle. I held up de candle to de clock, but couldn't tell de time. Den dey ask me if de little hand wuz on three mark or four mark. Dey wouldn't tell me de time but bye and bye I learned de time myself.

I asked de mistress to learn me a book and she sez, "Don't yo know we not allowed to learn you niggers nothin', don't ask me dat no more. I'll kill you if you do." I wuzn't goin' to ask her dat anymore.

When I wuz ten years old I wuz doin' women's work. I learned to do a little bit of eberthin'. I worked on de farm and I worked in de house. I learned to do a little bit of eberthin'. On de farm I did eberthin' cept plow.

I lived in a nice brick house. En de front wuz de valley pike. It wuz four and three-quarter miles to Harrisonburg and three and three-quarter miles to Mt. Crawford. It wuz a lobley place and a fine farm.

I used to sleep in a waggoner's bed. It wuz like a big bed-comfort, stuffed with wool. I laid it on de floor and sleep on it wid a blanket ober me, when I get up I roll up de bed and push it under de mistress's bed.

I earned money, but nebber got it. Dey wuz so mean I run away. I think dey wuz so mean dat dey make me run away and den dey wouldn't heb to pay de money. If I could roll up my sleeve I could show you a mark that cum from a beatin' I had wid a cow-hide whip. Dey whip me for nothin'.

After I run away I had around until the surrender cum. Eberybody cum to life then. It wuz a hot time in de ole place when dey sezs freedom. The colored ones jumped straight up and down.

De feed us plenty. We had pork, corn, rabbit, dey hed eberythin' nice. Dey made us stan' up to eat. Dey no low us sit down to eat. Der wuz bout twenty or thirty slaves on de farm an some ob dem hed der own gardens. Anythin' dey gib us to eat I liked. Dey had bees and honey.

I wore little calico dress in de summer, white, red, and blue. Some hed flowers and some hed strips. We went barefooted until Christmas. Den dey gabe us shoes. De shoes were regular ole common shoes; not eben calfskin. Dey weaved linen and made us our clothes. Dey hab sleeves, plain body and little skirt. I hed two of dem for winter.

I hab seen lots of slaves chained together, goin' south, some wuz singin' and some wuz cryin'. Some hed dey chillun and some didn't.

Dey took me to church wid dem and dey put me behind de door. Dey tole me to set der till dey cum out. And when I see dem cumin' out to follow behind and get into de carrage. I dursent say nothin'. I wuz like a petty dog.