

Slave Narrative of Jerry Hinton

Aug 16, 2012 | [Black Genealogy](#), [North Carolina](#) | 0 |

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Interviewer: T. Pat Matthews

Person Interviewed: Jerry Hinton

Location: North Carolina

Date of Birth: February, 1855

Place of Birth: Wake County, NC

My full name is Jerry Hinton. I was borned in February, 1855. I am not able ter work. I work all I can. I am trying ter do de best I can ter help myself. Yes, just tryin' ter do sumpin, ain't able ter work much. I am ruptured, an' old. My old house looks 'bout old as I do, it's 'bout to fall down, ain't able ter fix it up. It needs repairing. I ain't able ter make no repairs.

I was born on a plantation in Wake County. My master wus Richard Seawell, an' Missus wus named Adelaide. His plantation wus on Neuse River. He had two plantations, but I wus a little boy, an' don't remember how many acres in de plantation or how many slaves. There wus a lot of 'em tho'. I would follow master 'round an' look up in his face so he would give me biscuit an' good things ter eat.

My mother, before marriage, wus named Silvia Seawell, an' father wus named Andrew Hinton. Atter they wus married mother went by the name of Hinton, my father's family name. I had—I don't know—mos' anything wus good ter me. Master brought me biscuit an' I thought that wus the greatest thing at all. Yes, I got purty good food. Our clothes wus not fine, but warm. I went barefooted mos' o' the time, an' in summer I went in my shirt tail.

Dey called de slave houses 'quarters', de house where de overseer lived wus de 'Overseer's House'. Master had a overseer to look atter his men; De overseer wus named Bridgers. De house where Master lived wus de 'Great House'.

Dey would not allow us any books. I cannot read an' write. I have seen de patterollers, but I neber saw 'em whip nobody; but I saw 'em lookin' fer somebody ter whup. I've

neber seen a slave sold. I've neber seen a jail fer slaves or slaves in chains. I have seen master whup slaves though. I wus neber whupped. Dey wrung my ears an' pulled my nose to punish me.

Dere wus no churches on de plantation, but we had prayer meetin's in our homes. We went to de white folks church. My father used to take me by de hand an' carry me ter church. Daddy belonged ter de Iron Side Baptist Church. We called our fathers 'daddy' in slavery time. Dey would not let slaves call deir fathers 'father'. Dey called 'em 'daddy', an' white children called deir father, 'Pa'. I didn't work any in slavery time, 'cept feed pigs, an' do things fer my master; waited on him. I went 'round wid him a lot, an' I had rather see him come on de plantation any time dan to see my daddy. I do not remember any possums or other game being eaten at our house. I do not remember eber goin' a-fishin durin' slavery time.

Master had two boys ter go off ter de war. Dey carried 'em off ter de war. I don't know how many children dey had, but I remember two of 'em goin' off ter de war. Don't know what became of 'em.

I shore remember de Yankees. Yes sir, Ha! ha! I shore remember dem. Dem Yankees tore down an' drug out ever'thing, dey come across. Dey killed hogs, an' chickens. Dey took only part of a hog an' lef' de rest. Dey shot cows, an' sometimes jest cut off de hind quarters an' lef' de rest. Dey knocked de heads out o' de barrels o' molasses. Dey took horses, cows an' eber'thing, but they did not hurt any o' de children. Dey wus folks dat would tear down things.

Atter de surrender my mother moved over on de plantation where my father stayed. We stayed dere a long time, an' den we moved back to Richard Seawell's, old master's plantation, stayin' dere a long time. Den we moved to Jessie Taylor's place below Raleigh between Crabtree Creek an' Neuse River. When we lef' Taylor's we moved ter Banner Dam northeast of Raleigh near Boone's Pond. Mother an' father both died dere. Atter leaving dere I come here. I have lived in Oberlin ebery since. Guess I'll die here; if I can git de money to pay my taxes, I know I will die here.

I think slavery wus good because I wus treated all right. I think I am 'bout as much a slave now as ever.

I don't think any too much o' Abraham Lincoln, Jeff Davis or any o' dem men. Don't know much 'bout 'em. Guess Mr. Roosevelt is all right. 'Bout half the folks both black an' white is slaves an' don't know it. When I wus a slave I had nothin' on me, no responsibility on any of us, only to work. Didn't have no taxes to pay, neber had to think whur de next meal wus comin' from.

Dis country is in a bad fix. Looks like sumptin got to be done someway or people, a lot of 'em, are goin' to parish to death. Times are hard, an' dey is gettin' worse. Don't know how I am goin' to make it, if I don't git some help. We been prayin' fer rain. Crops are done injured, but maybe de Lawd will help us. Yes, I trust in de Lawd.

I been married twice. I married Henritta Nunn first, an' den Henritta Jones. I had three children by first marriage, an' none b [HW: y] second marriage. My wife is over seventy years old. We have a hard time making enough to git a little sumptin to eat. I wus mighty glad to see you when you come up dis mornin', an' I hopes what I have told you will help some one to know how bad we need help. I feels de Lawd will open up de way. Yes sir, I do.