

# The end of slavery



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

My name is Jeremiah, and I was born in 1828 in Minerva, N. Y. My Father was a freedman, and I worked with him on our family's farm in New York. When I was 32 years old, I was kidnapped and made a slave on a cotton plantation in Louisiana.

I had been working for two gentlemen driving a team of horse's south to Washington City in New York. On the second day of April 1851, I checked into the Gadsby's Hotel. I wasn't feeling well and just wanted to go to bed. I was in a lot of pain, and some people visited my room and suggested I take some medicine they had. I took the medicine and that was all I remembered. Next thing I know, I wake up chained to the floor of a slave pen. A white slave trader by the name of James H.

Burch came in, at which time I told him I was a freedman and had papers to prove it. He beat me on my bare back a hundred times with a cat-o-nine tails. He said he would kill me if I ever mentioned I was free again. I was kept in the pen for 10 days after which I was handcuffed and shackled and placed on a steamboat. When the ship arrived at New Orleans, I became sick with the smallpox. I spent about 3 weeks in the hospital. I finally ended up in Bayou Beouf where I was sold to Edwin Eppes, and forced to work as a slave on his cotton plantation. Living conditions on the plantation were terrible for slaves.

We lived in small huts where 10 slaves were cramped into each hut. We weren't given any kind of furniture, and made our own beds out of old rags and hay. We learned quickly not to complain because that would always result in a bad beating. Our food was of poor quality and we survived mostly

on fatty meat and cornbread. We were only given one pair of shoes and three items of underwear a year.

These, along with the other items of clothing given to us by our master, were baggy and made of course material. In 1861, a war broke out between the states, but it wasn't until 1863 when a battle broke out near the plantation I was at. My master and his family fled leaving us all behind. When the blue coats arrived the next morning, they told us we were free, that we could leave. I was the only slave that knew what freedom was. The rest were born into slavery and didn't have anywhere to go.

They didn't know what to do. I invited some of the slaves I had become close friends with to travel with me back to New York. It was going to be a long and dangerous trip home.

It took us about 35 days to make it to my family's ranch. After almost four years away from home, I was so happy to see my family. I shared my whole terrible experience with them, and I thank God that I am back home with them and once again a free man.