

House slaves vs. field slaves essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Slavery was a harsh and terrible way of life for all slaves. However there were differences in class among slaves. Lower class slaves were "field slaves". Upper class slaves were "house slaves". The daily routines of these slaves differed greatly. Field slaves sole purpose was production.

Their duties were raising, planting and cultivation of crops, clearing land, burning underbrush, rolling logs, splitting rails, carrying water, mending fences, spreading fertilizer, and breaking soil. Working from sunrise to sunset was merely an analogy for slave labor, they often worked before sunrise and considerably past sunset. A house slave daily routine included caring for the house, the yard and gardens, cooked meals, cared for children of their master, and drove carriages. One disadvantage of being a house slave for women was their vulnerability to the master. The master would sexually abuse the slaves as he wished and there was nothing the slave could do about it. Also the house slaves had to deal with the fact that no matter how much better they were treated, they were still slaves and had to live a life of servitude.

Moreover, working in the house, there is more supervision than working in the field. On a field there are hundreds of workers to one overseer, wherein the house there are a few slaves versus the slave owner's entire household, which could include extended family. I'm sure that house slaves and field slaves got along at times, and at other times they didn't. They are both still slaves, and still had to endure grueling work whether in the house or on the field.

Any time one group thinks that another group is getting something that they aren't getting tensions are going to arise. The field slaves were aware of the better treatment, the educational opportunities, and travel and culture opportunities that house slaves received. This easily caused tensions with field slaves and house slaves because field slaves felt it was unfair. The slave who was chosen to be the driver was probably the most important slave on the plantation. The driver helped to enforce the rules and could even whip other slaves.

He could also help other slaves by making requests to the master. I think it was very difficult to be in this position. The driver has higher powers, but he is still a slave. He sees the injustice and cruelty the slaves are getting, but all he can do is follow the master's orders.

It was also especially difficult because the driver slave had to have the trust of the master and the other slaves. The master had to be sure he would not betray him. The driver must have the respect and cooperation from the slaves. I'm sure it was very difficult to please both parties.