



SLAVERY by Another Name

UNCOVERING TRUTH AND FICTION

GRADE LEVEL: 9-12

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OVERVIEW

This activity guide focuses on analyzing media and writings produced during the early twentieth century as well as making connections to contemporary media forms and outlets, including the journalism of *Slavery by Another Name* author Douglas A. Blackmon. Students will deconstruct both opinion and myth and write in a variety of media forms while also evaluating the integrity of facts.

BACKGROUND

Though Southern blacks were politically disenfranchised, segregated, violently intimidated, and economically disadvantaged, protests against forced labor and other inequalities were continuous. Many protests were from forced laborers themselves.

In 1884, a series of remarkable letters was sent from the Pratt Coal Mines to Alabama's new inspector of prisons by twenty-five-year-old convict Ezekial Archey. He was one of hundreds of convicts being worked in a growing network of mines and factories around the burgeoning city of Birmingham, Alabama.

This was the new, industrial South, envisioned just prior to the Civil War by slaveholder John T. Milner, an engineer and savvy businessman, whom many consider the father of Southern industrialization, particularly in the deep South. Milner also held racist views and was a despotic employer.

The news media played an important role in publicizing the atrocities of forced labor that were conducted by industrialists like Milner. In the early 1900s, dramatic stories of the abuse and wretched conditions of convict laborers began to be publicized through trials and newspaper accounts. The egregiousness of the violence and corruption of the system began to turn public opinion against convict leasing.

For additional background, visit the following from the *Slavery by Another Name* Theme Gallery:

Life in the Coal Mine:

<http://www.pbs.org/tpt/slavery-by-another-name/themes/coal-mining/>

Voices of Protest:

<http://www.pbs.org/tpt/slavery-by-another-name/themes/voices-protest/>

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. What are ways to distinguish fact from opinion?
2. What techniques are used in persuasive writing?
3. What is myth and what has been its role in history?
4. How can media be used to raise awareness about important issues?

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

Throughout history, media has been wielded as a powerful tool to inform and advocate, but it is important to analyze and critique it, rather than simply consume it.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY: PERSUASIVELY SPEAKING

Materials

- Excerpt from “White Men of Alabama Stand Together” by John T. Milner
In this 1890 pamphlet, John T. Milner, a Southern industrialist who helped found Birmingham, Alabama, but who also was a former slaveholder who turned to forced labor to spur the emergence of the New South, argues for the need to protect the rights of white men and for the return of blacks to subservient positions.

1. Prepare to view “An Unlikely Advocate,” by facilitating a discussion using the pre-viewing questions. Provide background on the clip for students. After viewing, continue the discussion using the post-viewing questions.
2. Ask students to think about ways that Archey used persuasive techniques in his correspondence to the inspector of prisons. Review specific persuasive techniques.

3. Next, tell students that they are going to read a piece of persuasive writing that supported the obstruction of freedom for blacks. Distribute “Excerpt from ‘White Men of Alabama Stand Together’.” Have students read independently.

4. After reading, have students:

- a. Identify the author and his title.
- b. Determine the author’s purpose.
- c. Determine the central theme of the text.
- d. Consider techniques that the author employs to persuade.
- e. Consider what viewpoints are missing.

5. Have students identify three statements that are fact. Then have students identify three statements that are opinion.

6. Compile a list of the most commonly picked statements on the board. Designate two areas in the classroom — one for fact and one for opinion. Read one of the most commonly picked statements from the material and have students stand on the side of the room based on what they think the statement should be — either fact or opinion. Continue this for the remainder of the most commonly picked statements.

7. Facilitate a post-activity discussion to examine why it can be hard to distinguish fact from opinion — also have students discuss what resources they can use to verify facts.

8. Then, have students consider: If you had the opportunity to speak back to either Archey or Milner, what would you say? And why? Have students speak back to either Archey or Milner through a written response.

ACTIVITY: SAME STORY, DIFFERENT TIMES

Materials

- Excerpt from “Hard Time: From Alabama’s Past, Capitalism and Racism In a Cruel Partnership” by Douglas A. Blackmon | *Wall Street Journal*, July 16, 2001
- “Negro Still a Slave” by Raymond Patterson | *The Washington Post*, June 25, 1903
- “Alabama Ends Convict Leasing” | AP, June 30, 1928

1. Prepare to listen to an “Unlikely Response,” by facilitating a discussion using the pre-listening questions. Provide background on the clip for students. After listening, continue the discussion using the post-listening questions.
2. Steer the discussion to have students consider the differences between an article and an opinion piece.
3. Distribute Excerpt from “Hard Time: From Alabama’s Past, Capitalism and Racism In a Cruel Partnership”; “Negro Still a Slave”; and “Alabama Ends Convict Leasing.” Read the articles together as a class.
4. As a class, analyze the three texts and note differences in language, tone, and coverage.
5. Then as a class, identify the 5 W's of journalism for each:
 - a. Who is it about?
 - b. What happened?
 - c. Where did it take place?
 - d. When did it take place?
 - e. Why did it happen?
 - f. How did it happen?
6. Next, have students consider the following:
 - a. Who, if anyone, was interviewed in the news articles?
 - b. What sources were used?
 - c. Is the article fact-based or opinion-based?
 - d. Whose voices are privileged? Why? How does this affect the reader’s interpretation?
7. Tell students that they are going to write their own fact-based article about an issue relating to the prison system. Possibilities include labor, reform, rehabilitation, or business. Students should research and find two articles that provide support for the article they will write on their own.
8. Have students write a news article that includes interviews, facts, and answers the 5 W’s. Encourage students to contact experts or thought leaders in addition to interviewing people who they know.
9. After they have been written and edited (consider self and peer editing), collate the news articles into a class newspaper that’s photocopied or post in an online classroom space such as a blog platform like Tumblr (www.tumblr.com) or WordPress (www.wordpress.com).
10. Have students comment on articles in the class’ newspaper. Provide possible questions

such as: Is enough support provided? Is the article truly fact-based? Review tips for offering constructive criticism.

11. Facilitate a post-activity discussion about students' news stories. Discuss what information and quotes they used in their stories, discuss the role of inclusion and omission of facts, opinions, and voices. Also discuss any challenges in producing work that is fact-based.

ACTIVITY: THE MYTH OF JOHN HENRY?

Materials

- John Henry, The Steel Driving Man
http://www.ibiblio.org/john_henry/broadside2.html
- "Taking Swings at a Myth, With John Henry the Man" by William Grimes
New York Times, October 18, 2006
<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/18/books/18grim.html>
- Lyrics to "John Henry"
http://www.ibiblio.org/john_henry/lyrics1.html

1. Have students read "John Henry, The Steel Driving Man." Ask students to describe what they've read and what the piece is about. Facilitate a discussion about the myth of John Henry. Connect the myth to the rise of industrialization in the South.

2. Distribute "Lyrics to 'John Henry'." Explain to students that there are several variations of the song and its lyrics.

3. While following along with the lyrics, play a version of "John Henry." There are many to choose from at ibiblio (www.ibiblio.org/john_henry/songlist.html).

4. Facilitate a discussion about myth. Have students define the term. Ask students to name any other myths or legends they are familiar with.

5. Have students read "Taking Swings at a Myth, With John Henry the Man." Discuss the myth surrounding John Henry as outlined in the article. Also discuss how various groups used John Henry as a symbol.

6. Next, have students write a first-person essay from the perspective of John Henry. Have them consider: What would he say about himself? The myth? What would he think about what has been said about him? What does he see as his role in history?

7. Have students share their essays with the class.

MULTIMEDIA CLIPS

An Unlikely Advocate

<http://www.pbs.org/tpt/slavery-by-another-name/classrooms/english-media-literacy/>

This film clip from *Slavery by Another Name* highlights the letters of Ezekiel Archey, a convict laborer who, in 1883, began advocating for justice by writing letters to the Alabama Inspector of Prisons about the treacherous conditions at the Pratt Coal Mines.

Pre-Viewing Discussion Questions

1. What are some ways that citizens use persuasive writing and speech to fight against injustice?
2. Have you ever written anything to persuade a group of people? What was the outcome?

Post-Viewing Discussion Questions

1. What is the significance of what Ezekiel Archey did?

An Unlikely Response

<http://video.pbs.org/widget/partnerplayer/2195240579/?w=400&h=224&chapterbar=false&autoplay=true>

In this excerpt from the book *Slavery by Another Name*, author Douglas A. Blackmon writes about the reaction, from white and black readers, to the *Wall Street Journal* article that he wrote about convict leasing and how that article laid the foundation for his writing of *Slavery by Another Name*.

Pre-Listening Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever read something that made you react strongly? If so, what was it and what was your reaction?

Post-Listening Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think there was so much reaction to Blackmon's article?
2. Why do you think that so few readers expressed shock to Blackmon's article?
3. Why do you think convict leasing was a "forgotten" history as Blackmon asserts?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

White Men of Alabama Stand Together by John T. Milner (full version)

Alabama Department of Archives and History

<http://digital.archives.alabama.gov/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/voices&CISOPTR=3536&REC=2>

Analysis of John Henry Music | ibiblio

http://www.ibiblio.org/john_henry/musicanalysis.html

STANDARDS

Common Core State Standards

Reading Standards for Literacy in History and the Social Studies

Standards 1 to 3: Key Ideas and Details

Standards 4 to 6: Craft and Structure

Standards 7 to 9: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

<http://www.corestandards.org/>

NCTE/IRA National Standards for English Language Arts

Standard 1; Standard 3; Standard 5; Standard 6

<http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Books/Sample/StandardsDoc.pdf>

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

Theme 2: Time, Continuity, Change

<http://www.socialstudies.org/standards>

National Standards for History

ERA 6: The Development of the Industrial United States (1870–1900)

Standard 2B; Standard 3B

<http://www.nchs.ucla.edu/Standards/>


Historical Thinking Standards (National Center for History in the Schools)

Standard 2; Standard 3; Standard 4


<http://nchs.ucla.edu/Standards/historical-thinking-standards-1/overview>

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WHITE MEN OF ALABAMA



STAND TOGETHER.



1860 AND 1890.




—BY—

HON. JOHN T. MILNER,

SENATOR FOR THE

THIRTEENTH DISTRICT, STATE OF ALABAMA.



BIRMINGHAM, ALA. :

McDAVID PRINTING COMPANY,

1890.



White Men of Alabama--Stand Together!

HON. JOHN T. MILNER.

In our system of Government the States alone have autonomy and although we may be for the time being bound by and subject to the laws of the Federal Government, still it is under the laws, usages and customs of his State alone that the citizen lives and enjoys life. The States, therefore, are charged with the future of their people, not only for the time being but for all time to come. As one of your representatives in your State Legislature, I have been brought gravely to consider the political and material future of Alabama.

We have 52,000 square miles of territory, naturally the best adapted to the uses and purposes of man of any like territory on this continent, or in the world. In our agriculture, where our soil has been properly cultivated and tilled, as our federal statistics of 1860 will show, there was but one State in this Union, our neighbor, Mississippi, that equalled us in the per capita production of agricultural values. In minerals our capacity to give employment to manufacturing people, the verdict of the world now is that Alabama has no equal. Our timber, though fast disappearing, is a mine of wealth. The cotton planter follows close upon the heels of the ox-team and the log-hauler, and the southern section of Alabama will be supplied with the cotton plant, the perpetual tree of gold in place of the tall pines that have gone away and have been turned into gold.

Cotton, iron, coal and timber, our exportable products and gold are convertible terms, and are practically at the seashore, awaiting the ready demands of the nations. Without any allegory

or figures of speech, Alabama, in the native elements that produce comfort, happiness and wealth, is unsurpassed anywhere on the earth. The race of white men who live here and practically own all of this grand territory, and who, like the Indian (as his tradition shows, for he has no history), who after roaming over this vast continent in search of a happy home, christened and named the territory we now occupy "Alabama," or "Here we rest." "Here we rest" for our children and our children's children. "Here we rest," for our pure civilization. "Here we rest" for our civil institutions, and when the last trumpet has sounded would to God that the millions of souls that may be called up around the great white throne from Alabama, were of our own race and our own people. But this can never be, for God has placed here two races of men about equal in numbers, one the highest type of his people, with a history reaching beyond the known periods of time, illustrious and grand through all ages. The other, without tradition, without a history, and without a monument or a name, and looked upon, the world over, as the lowest type of man. These two races are made equal under the laws of our land. The one has a history, and we know from the past what his future, untrammelled will be. What it will be with this other race, his equal in civil and political power, we have, from the dealings of other nations with the emancipated African on this continent, a fair prognosis of his future. The testimony, as hereafter furnished, is full and complete and authentic, and is statistical and true, and will constitute a large portion of my address.

There were 6,000,000 of Africans held as slaves on this continent at the beginning of this century. Of this number only 883,602 were held in the United States, about 2,000,000 by Spain on the continent, and in her West Indian Islands; about 9,000,000 by England on the continent and in the West Indies. The balance were held by the Portugese, French, Dutch, Danes and Norwegians. Their descendants have all been emancipated now, some for nearly 100 years, and some for hardly one. They have all gone into and become a part of the political and social systems of the people where they lived, and have everywhere retrograded and gone back toward barbarism. What they have done, however, since emancipation is fully and plainly marked out by history, and for our sakes, I regret to say, has been disappointing and disastrous in every point of view. In

the material world, the countries once cultivated by them as slaves, except in the United States and the little English island of Barbadoes, and attempted to be cultivated by the emancipated African as a freeman ALONE, have grown up in wilderness and weeds. Save as above stated, there is not a single exception to this rule on this continent, and Chinamen and Coolies now fill their places as field laborers all over the West Indies and on the Spanish Main. As political factors they have also been fully tried and found wanting and the autonomy that was once given them by the nations of Europe, have, after a sad and bitter experience, been taken away, and there is not now a negro community on this continent under the control of any European Government that has practically any more voice in making the laws under which they live than they did when they were slaves. In the language hereafter given of the great statesmen, historians and authors of Great Britain, the greatest and wisest of all the nations of the world, the negro is unfitted by nature to govern himself, much less other races of men. The experiment, as the testimony hereafter introduced, will show, has been fully tried, and he has been found to be a disappointment in every sense of the word, when measured by the rules that govern white civilizations.

The emancipationists of Europe at first expected to make of the negro a man, a grand man, naturally the equal of the white man in all the functions and duties of life, but after an experiment of fifty years or more have admitted their disappointment.

The Government of the United States has started out in the same journey, and have gone a step further than any other nation in this, that they not only gave them emancipation, as a political power, but placed their white citizens, their former masters, completely under their control in several States of the Union. They were as ever boneless and disappointing as political factors, and the power thus forced upon them soon slipped away.

I was a citizen of California in 1850, and voted for the free constitution of that State, on the ground that no Africans or admixture of the inferior races was wanted there. Would to God, Alabama could have been organized as a free State, and our labor element were all whites.

Had this been the case, General Sherman would never have marched from Atlanta to the sea, or General Smith from Mobile to Montgomery. One hundred thousand stalwart, able-bodied, arms-

bearing men in Alabama were simply lookers on as the Federal armies marched through Alabama. It is useless, however, to deal in conjectures, as we are now confronted with a condition that theory or conjecture cannot solve or move away, and I, therefore proceed to the discussion of the real question—the future of Alabama.

As above stated, the testimony will be voluminous, but its introduction is necessary, as the statements are so startling that if made on my authority alone, would be considered as simply the language of hyperbole, and would not be believed.

The statistics taken from the records of our own nation, though well understood by old people, would be a revelation to the new generation coming on the stage of action since the war. For instance, the productions of the Black Belt of Alabama, cultivated exclusively by negroes in 1860, and by them in 1870 and 1880, show for 1870 only 36.92 per capita, and only 43.35 for 1880, of the production in 1860. Or in other words there has been a shrinkage or paralysis of negro labor since emancipation, as shown by the United States census, of 63.77 per cent. for 1870, and 56.65 per cent. for 1880, and for 1890 of 49.65 estimated per cent. They have produced a little over one-third of the bushels and pounds since the emancipation that they did, per capita, as slaves. The free negro has done and is doing better here in a material point of view, than in any other country in the world where emancipated. A bare subsistence is all he wants and cares for, and with the little efforts he puts forth in Alabama he gets that, and is satisfied, as he is elsewhere in the world. History shows that he cares but little for political power, unless it is forced on him by designing white men, and when he gets power he has always used it improperly and to no good purpose.

It is evident, however, that the Republican party of the United States intends to force political power into his hands again in the South. This is partly for party purposes, and partly, as was the case with the Abolitionists of England, upon the ground that "we have made him a free man and we intend to make something 'out of him or bust,'" to use a slang expression.

Bust it will be, but blood and tears, unrest, disorganization of labor, material and agricultural ruin will characterize the effort, as it did in the English emancipation colonies, before they found out that the negro could not be made to harmonize, or assimilate with

Excerpt from Hard Time: From Alabama's Past, Capitalism and Racism In a Cruel Partnership

July 16, 2001

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Till 1928, Companies 'Leased' Convicts, Most of Them Black and Many Doomed

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Sent to the Mines for 'Gaming'

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The Wall Street Journal by Douglas A. Blackmon

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — On March 30, 1908, Green Cottenham was arrested by the Shelby County, Ala., sheriff and charged with vagrancy. After three days in the county jail, the 22-year-old African-American was sentenced to an unspecified term of hard labor. The next day, he was handed over to a unit of U.S. Steel Corp. and put to work with hundreds of other convicts in the notorious Pratt Mines complex on the outskirts of Birmingham. Four months later, he was still at the coal mines when tuberculosis killed him.

Born two decades after the end of slavery in America, Green Cottenham died a slave in all but name. The facts are dutifully entered in the handwritten registry of prisoners in Shelby County and in other state and local government records.

In the early decades of the 20th century, tens of thousands of convicts — most of them, like Mr. Cottenham, indigent black men — were snared in a largely forgotten justice system rooted in racism and nurtured by economic expedience. Until nearly 1930, decades after most other Southern states had abolished similar programs, Alabama was providing convicts to businesses hungry for hands to work in farm fields, lumber camps, railroad construction gangs and, especially in later years, mines. For state and local officials, the incentive was money; many years, convict leasing was one of Alabama's largest sources of funding.

'Assault With a Stick'

Most of the convicts were charged with minor offenses or violations of "Black Code" statutes passed to reassert white control in the aftermath of the Civil War. Mr. Cottenham was one of more than 40 Shelby County men shipped to the Pratt Mines in the winter of 1908, nearly half of them serving time for jumping a freight train, according to the Shelby County jail log. George Roberson was sent on a conviction for "assault with a stick," the log says. Lou William was in for adultery. John Jones for gambling.

Subjected to squalid living conditions, poor medical treatment, scant food and frequent floggings, thousands died. Entries on a typical page from a 1918 state report on causes of death among leased convicts include: "Killed by Convict, Asphyxia from Explosion, Tuberculosis, Burned by Gas Explosion, Pneumonia, Shot by Foreman, Gangrenous

Appendicitis, Paralysis." Mr. Cottenham was one of dozens of convicts who died at the Pratt Mines complex in 1908.

This form of government and corporate forced labor ended in 1928 and slipped into the murk of history, discussed little outside the circles of sociologists and penal historians. But the story of Alabama's trade in human labor endures in minute detail in tens of thousands of pages of government records stored in archives, record rooms and courthouses across the state.

These documents chronicle another chapter in the history of corporate involvement in racial abuses of the last century. A \$4.5 billion fund set up by German corporations, after lawsuits and intense diplomatic pressure from the U.S. and others, began making payments last month to the victims of Nazi slave-labor programs during the 1930s and 1940s. Japanese manufacturers have come under criticism for their alleged use of forced labor during the same period. Swiss banks agreed in 1998 to a \$1.25 billion settlement of claims related to the seizure of Jewish assets during the Holocaust.

Traditions of Segregation

In the U.S., many companies — real-estate agents that helped maintain rigid housing segregation, insurers and other financial-services companies that red-lined minority areas as off-limits, employers of all stripes that discriminated in hiring — helped maintain traditions of segregation for a century after the end of the Civil War. But in the U.S., recurrent calls for reparations to the descendants of pre-Civil War slaves have made little headway. And there has been scant debate over compensating victims of 20th century racial abuses involving businesses.

The biggest user of forced labor in Alabama at the turn of the century was Tennessee Coal, Iron & Railroad Co., the U.S. Steel unit that owned the mine where Mr. Cottenham died. Dozens of other companies used convicts, too, many of them now defunct or absorbed into larger businesses. Executives at some of the corporate descendants say they shouldn't be asked to bear responsibility for the actions of executives long dead or the practices of businesses acquired decades ago.

U.S. Steel says it can find no evidence to suggest that the company ever abused or caused the deaths of convicts in Alabama. U.S. Steel spokesman Thomas R. Ferrall says that concerns voiced about convict leasing by Elbert H. Gary, the company's chairman at the time, helped set the stage for "knocking the props out from under" the system. "We think U.S. Steel proper was a positive player in this history ... was a force for good," Mr. Ferrall says.

The company's early presence in Alabama is still evident a few miles from downtown Birmingham. There, on a hillside overgrown with brush, hundreds of sunken graves litter the ground in haphazard rows. A few plots bear stones. No other sign or path marks the place. Only a muddy scar in the earth — the recently filled-in mouth of a spent coal mine — suggests that this is the cemetery of the Pratt Mines complex.

"The convicts were buried out there," says Willie Clark, an 82-year-old retired coal miner. He grew up in a house that overlooked the cemetery and the sprawling mine operation that once surrounded it. "I heard my daddy talking about how they would beat the convicts with pick handles. If they didn't like them, they would kill them."

He and other older people living in the ramshackle "Pratt City" neighborhood surrounding the old mining site still call the graveyard the "U.S. Steel cemetery." There are no records of those buried on the hillside. Mr. Cottenham could be among them.

When Mr. Cottenham died in 1908, U.S. Steel was still new to convict leasing. But by then, the system was decades old and a well-oiled machine.

After the Civil War, most Southern states set up similar penal systems, involving tens of thousands of African-Americans. In those years, the Southern economy was in ruins. State officials had few resources, and county governments had even fewer. Leasing prisoners to private individuals or companies provided revenue and eliminated the need to build prisons. Forcing convicts to work as part of their punishment was entirely legal; the 13th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, adopted in 1865, outlaws involuntary servitude — except for "duly convicted" prisoners.

Convict leasing in other states never reached the scale of Alabama's program. By the turn of the century, most states had ended the practice or soon would because of opposition on humanitarian grounds and from organized labor. Convict leasing also wasn't well-suited to the still largely agrarian economies of most Southern states. But in Alabama, industrialization was generating a ravenous appetite for the state's coal and iron ore. Production was booming, and unions were attempting to organize free miners. Convicts provided an ideal captive work force: cheap, usually docile, unable to organize and available when free laborers went on strike.

Under the convict-leasing system, government officials agreed with a company such as Tennessee Coal to provide a specific number of prisoners for labor. State officials signed contracts to supply companies with large blocks of men — often hundreds at a time — who had committed felonies. Companies entered into separate deals with county sheriffs to obtain thousands more prisoners who had been convicted of misdemeanors. Of the 67 counties in Alabama, 51 actively leased their convicts, according to one contemporary newspaper report. The companies built their own prisons, fed and clothed the convicts, and supplied guards as they saw fit.

In Barbour County, in the cotton country of southern Alabama, nearly 700 men were leased between June 1891 and November 1903, most for \$6 a month, according to the leatherbound Convict Record still kept in the courthouse basement. Most were sent to mines operated by Tennessee Coal or Sloss-Sheffield Steel & Iron Co., another major industrial presence in Birmingham.

Sheriffs, deputies and some court officials derived most of their compensation from fees charged to convicts for each step in their own arrest, conviction and shipment to a private company. That gave sheriffs an incentive to arrest and obtain convictions of as many people as possible. They also had an incentive to feed the prisoners as little as possible, since they could pocket the difference between what the state paid them and what they spent to maintain the convicts while in their custody. Some convicts had enough money to pay the fees themselves and gain their freedom; the many who didn't were instead put to work. Company lease payments for the convicts' time at hard labor then were used to cover the fees.

In 1902 and 1903, the only period for which a complete prisoner ledger survives for Jefferson County, where Birmingham is located, local officials prosecuted more than 3,000 misdemeanor cases, the great majority of them yielding a convict to work in a Sloss-Sheffield mine.

One of those convicts was John Clarke, a black miner convicted of "gaming" on April 11, 1903. Unable to pay, he ended up at the Sloss-Sheffield mines. Working off the fine would take 10 days. Fees for the sheriff, the county clerk and even the witnesses who testified in the case required that Mr. Clarke serve an additional 104 days in the mines. Sloss-Sheffield acquired him at a rate of \$9 a month, Jefferson County records show. One month and three days later, he was dead, crushed by "falling rock," according to the Alabama Board of Inspectors of Convicts, the agency that monitored the system.

NEGRO STILL A SLAVE

Two Forms of Peonage Existing in the Cotton Belt.

LASH TO ENFORCE DISCIPLINE

Under the Contract Labor Law, Just Declared Unconstitutional, and the System of Hiring Out Negroes Convicted of Offenses to Men Who Pay Their Fines, Incredible Abuses Spring Up.

BY RAYMOND PATTERSON.

Special Correspondence of The Washington Post.

Opelika, Ala., June 25.—"Peonage" is a new term here in the Chattahoochee Valley. Most of the planters and all of the negroes fail to recognize its meaning, although the thing itself exists all about them. Peonage, or involuntary servitude, always of black men to white masters, is actually common, not only in Southwestern Georgia and Southeastern Alabama, but in almost every strictly agricultural county throughout the real cotton belt. The planters and the negroes themselves call it by much different names, but the involuntary servitude exists, none the less, and it is accompanied in many painful instances not only by restraint of the liberty of the individual, but by personal violence and by the degradation of the lash.

Ignorance of the negro, have resulted in transferring many of the black men into actual, and as they believe, perfectly legal slavery, which they have chosen in preference to the admitted misery of a convict's life. This kind of peonage is chiefly built upon fraud, violence, and misrepresentation. It nevertheless exists, and to a large extent, but in justice to the better class of planters it should be explained that they are not parties to it, although their own system is only a shade better, so far as the negro is concerned. It is this peonage, based upon original criminal or civil charges in open court that Judges Jones and Speer have bravely started to uproot. That it was time no honest man can deny.

What started Judge Speer to stir up the grand jury was the arrest, ten days ago, of three young men in Jasper County, Ga., Will Shy, Arthur Glawson, and Frank Turner. They were yesterday fined \$1,000 for violation of the contract labor law, the court setting the fine aside under certain conditions. The prosecutor was Will Waters, a negro, who alleges that he was held in actual slavery. He had made a contract to work for Shy from January until August, and, like all negroes, obtained one advance of money and rations after another. All of a sudden he found himself in debt for \$35 beyond the full amount of his contract, and thereupon, according to the usual negro custom, skipped out of the plantation during the night and went to work for another planter a dozen miles or so away. He was, of course, traced there, and Shy and Turner drove after him in a buggy, tied him to the back axle, and carried him back to his old plantation at full speed, the negro being dragged a part of the way, and whipped incessantly both en route and on arrival at the old plantation. The negro's wife managed to get down to Macon, where she swore out the necessary warrants to secure his release and the arrest of his captors.

Under Contract Labor Law

ALABAMA ENDS CONVICT LEASING

800 Happy Negroes Sing Old
Time Spirituals on Last Day
in the Mines.

GOVERNOR GRAVES PRESENT

Many Prisoners Get Paroles as
Others Go to Road Camps
and State Farms.

FLATTOP, Ala., June 30 (P).—Strains of "Swing Low, Sweet Charlotte," and "All My Troubles Are Over" wafted from shafts of coal mines here today as 800 negro convicts completed their last "task" under the Alabama convict lease system, a practice of more than twenty years standing.

Condemned as a "relic of barbarism," the convict leasing system ends at midnight after a fight which lasted for thirteen years. The first agitation against selling the services of convicts of the State to private interests was started in 1915.

Governor Bibb Graves promised that convict leasing would end with

his inauguration. With the aid of the Legislature the Governor's plan was written into law and all white prisoners were put on State highway projects and on State farms last June. Because of the lack of facilities it was necessary to delay removal of some prisoners until facilities for working them had been obtained.

Five hundred of the prisoners from the coal mines here and at Aldrich mines today were transferred to the State's model prison farm in Escambia County. The farm is composed of 1,304 acres, 700 of which are cleared and under cultivation. Others will be distributed among road building camps in the State.

The feasibility of working convicts on State highways was a question debated by the State authorities when the Federal Government refused to aid highway projects upon which convict labor was used. According to Colonel Woolsey Finnell, State Highway Director, the plan has proved a success and has effected a great saving for the State.

The countenances of the convicts as they lined up to turn in their carbide lamps and coal picks for the last time were described as sufficient reward for Governor Graves and other State officials who came to supervise the work of transferring the prisoners.

"Boss, I'm no longer in slavery," and other expressions were addressed to the officials by the dusky prisoners as they broke camp. Fifty-six were made happier still when the director of the State Convict Department gave them paroles as a reward for faithful and efficient work. They will be permitted to remain outside prison walls for ninety days and at the end of this period if their behavior has warranted it, they will receive extensions and possibly pardons.