

Slaves were hyper aware of their situation and their status as nothing more than property. Masters worked them until they couldn't work anymore, and once that happened, they were replaced and discarded. The life of a slave was never one of luxury and even if their work was not extremely physically taxing, the psychological impact on all slaves was immense. Slave owners very rarely felt remorse for the actions they took against their slaves, or for the drain that a life of servitude could have on a person. If by chance a slave owner did feel bad or begin to question the actions and practices of slavery, they quickly dismissed any possibility of wrongdoing and justified their actions by telling themselves, and anyone that would listen, that they were incredibly caring and held a paternal role in the lives of their slaves. (138) Some slave owners would even give their slaves gifts (75/76), an action that, in the mind of the slave owners, was immensely generous and going above and beyond. These justifications led some masters to even believe that the slaves were better off in servitude than they would be as free men and women (64). This simply was not true however, those who lived in servitude couldn't possibly have a better life than those in freedom, as the single trait of being free outweighed any comforts that may have been afforded to a captive slave. The life in captivity, was worrisome to all slaves, but especially the women and girls, in a household with a male master, any female slave lived in constant fear of sexual assault, a all too common occurrence in colonial America. (57) This state of constant fear was only part of the vast chasm that was the power dynamic between a slave and a master. The life of a slave especially one who served their master directly, such as a domestic slave, was characterized by 24/7 service to their masters (57). Living in the house with their masters these slaves were expected to be a always ready tool for the master and heir family. The theme of slaves being seen as tools was also prevalent in this era, slaves were used while they

were beneficial and obedient and sold away or neglected once that ceased to be true, slaves that were no longer useful, such as those who were elderly or sick, were considered a nuisance and nothing but a financial burden.(86) The dynamic between owners and their slaves was incredibly degrading to the slaves, being treated like a tool each and every day, and being stripped of all personal liberties broke the spirits of slaves. The master's believed they were being kind and humane, and seemingly couldn't comprehend that the slaves didn't feel the same way.

Escape was always in the minds of slaves, even from a young age (48), the prospect of freedom was exhilarating and despite the dangers, plans to escape were frequently entertained by most slaves. Once a slave got serious about escape much planning had to take place, and it couldn't be too obvious that they were planning something, slaves that looked like they were thinking too much were reprimanded. After the initial individual planning, a slave would almost certainly need outside assistance to successfully escape the grasp of involuntary servitude (119), and plans of escape were seldom disclosed to fellow slaves as out of either fear or jealousy, a potential escapee's plans could be foiled if someone told the master of the plans (110). Those who helped from the outside kept plans incredibly secretive and complex, relying on the coordination of many people (119), the escape required lots of work and was incredibly dangerous. Following the initial escape, life was not immediately easy for fugitive slaves, everything was difficult and above all they had to avoid recapture. One tactic to avoid capture was to hide in plain sight, especially in the North where seeing a free African American wasn't as jarring as somewhere in the South (119). Survival was greatly due to the support of free blacks in the communities that fugitive slaves escaped to (121). The first priority was finding reliable

and relatively safe lodging (121), following lodging was employment, of which opportunities were few for black Americans (122), often having to take jobs with very similar work to what they did as slaves including hard labor, and domestic service. If the escaped slave was a woman, of equal if not greater importance was finding a husband, as a legal marriage with proof provided some protections and a second income aided survival (156, 159). As a fugitive, slaves were always being hunted, ads were posted offering rewards for runaway slaves (103) and many slave owners had powerful, wide reaching networks of friends that would happily inform them of, and assist in the capture of any escaped slave they may come across (129). Even years after their initial escape slaves still had to be extremely careful going about their daily lives, as no matter what they were still breaking the law, and under the fugitive slave act, they could be reclaimed by their masters in any state they resided in, regardless of that state's political position on slavery.

Life for a family that was enslaved together was very different from free family life in many ways, and similar in others, and while otherwise dominated by uncertainty, their lives did have one sure thing; unending enslavement. The similarities were that members of the family could find solace in each other's company, and desired to stay together as much as they could. Traditions were passed down, be it beliefs and historic recounts or knowledge of how to do the work required by their slave owners. The differences were in every other aspect of family life for slaves, slave owners rarely cared about slaves' families; at auction familial relation was rarely presented, and so through the sale and relocation of slaves, countless families were separated, never to be connected again. Those slaves who were lucky enough to remain with their families

still led very different lives than those of white families. The birth of a child for a white family was cause for celebration, and while still a joyous occasion for an enslaved family, the awareness of the suffering that would soon befall the child was a sobering reality for the family (50).

Families rarely got to spend time with each other during the day and were so exhausted in the nights that quality time spent together was a luxury for the slaves. The families of slaves were also punished for the actions of their family members, if one slave escaped the consequences would befall their family back home (150) possibly as a motivation for the escaped slave to come back, to save their family.

Influential and wealthy Americans were enamored with the idea of owning slaves. The relatively cheap labor and endlessly useful workforce was a big draw to them. All of the colonies were built on the backs of slavery (124), even colonies like New Hampshire which eventually led abolition movements. Slave holders didn't want to give up their slaves and would go to great lengths so that they wouldn't have to, dodging gradual abolition laws was a regular practice for slave owners (68). These slave owners worked their slaves incredibly hard, the workloads were so high that a slave would fall asleep as soon as their work for the day was done, out of sheer exhaustion. The work was also done in inhumane conditions, slaves would be working in extreme heat or cold without proper protections, and would suffer as a result. The slave masters greatly didn't care or even comprehend that the slaves were being treated inhumanely, they even believed that they were helping slaves, giving them comfortable lives, and treating them with care. For these reasons, slave owners, couldn't understand why slaves would want to escape,

naturally they wanted their slaves back so masters would resort to a number of techniques to reclaim their lost property. Notably they would put out ads in magazines, with rewards for the safe return of their slaves (103). The Fugitive Slave Act was passed to help slave owners recover and maintain their slaves, the passing of the law was one of many indications that the early United States government not only wasn't opposed to slavery, but actively encouraged and aided it's practice, this act made running away far more difficult and further widened the divide between slave holding and abolitionist states (106).