

Donna Wyant Howell

The Lives of Slave Women

ANNIE OSBORNE: My mammy plowed and hoed and chopped and picked cotton and jus' as good as the menfolks. I allus worked in the house, nussin' the white chillen and spinnin' and housework.

CLARA BRIM: I uster do anyt'ing in de fiel' de men done. Dey put me dere in de fiel' to wuk right 'long wid men. I's plowed and pull fodder and pick cotton and done mos' eb'ryt'ing to do in de fiel'.

BETTY POWERS: Mammy, pappy, an' their 12 chilluns lives in our cabin, so mammy have to cook fo' 14 people, 'sides her field wo'k. She am up 'way befo' daylight in de mo'nin' an' fixin' de breakfast, an' de suppah am fixed after dark. Dey have to use de pine-knot torch fo' to make de light so dey can see. Mammy wo'ked in de weavin' room. Many nights, yous could heah de "bump, bump" of de loom w'en mammy am wo'kin' to finish de task.

ANNA MILLER: De weavin' was de night work, after workin' all de day in de fiel'.

CATO CARTER: The mammies was confined with babies havin' to suck, they had to spin. I'd take them the thread and bring it back to the house when it was spinned. If they didn't spin seven or eight cuts a day, they'd git a whuppin'. It was consid'ble hard on a woman when she had a frettin' baby.

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I WAS A SLAVE™

True Life Stories told by former American Slaves in the 1930's

Chapter 3:
THE LIVES OF SLAVE WOMEN



Compiled by Donna Wyant Howell