

May 1936

Interview, Lucius Lamar Douglas and Lott Allen, Ex-Slave, 84 Years Old, Now Living at Orlando, Florida, May 18, 1936

Lucius Douglass

Lott Allen

Federal Writers' Project of the Work Projects Administration for the State of Florida

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/formerly_enslaved_narratives

Recommended Citation

Douglass, Lucius; Allen, Lott; and Federal Writers' Project of the Work Projects Administration for the State of Florida, "Interview, Lucius Lamar Douglas and Lott Allen, Ex-Slave, 84 Years Old, Now Living at Orlando, Florida, May 18, 1936" (1936). *Narratives of Formerly Enslaved Floridians*. 30.
https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/formerly_enslaved_narratives/30

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Floridiana - General at Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in Narratives of Formerly Enslaved Floridians by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usf.edu.

Federal Writer's Project
American Guide
Orlando, Fla.

Orlando Project
1793 Words

Lott Allen, editor
May 18, 1936

Lucius Lamar Douglass
(Ex-slave, 84 years old,
Now living at Orlando, Florida.)

" I was born in Jefferson County 'way back in 53 near
de line ob Madison County. My wife, she was born near
Greenville, Florida.

"My Master, de Old Man, he was General William Bailey.
He was a general durin' de Indian war, you know. He had
near 'bout 1,500 to 2,000 slaves, I reckon. I don't know.
He had a big farm an' owned property from de far side ob de
Madison County line to de Georgia line. Yes, sir, de Old Man
had five plantations. One in Jefferson County, den dere was
de one where I was at, an two at Lake Jackson an' one at
Hunter Hill. Dat was eight miles from Tallahassee.

"My mother had three children an' I was de fourth.
Dere was 11 head in our family in all, but dey'd dead now,
all 'cept two. My wife, she had only two children. Dat
was my youngest son dat went by 'while ago, de other one,
he works over dere back of dat place by de bakery.

"My father, he was named George, an my mother, she was
named Lucindia. De Old Man, he was not healthy an my father
used to follow him 'round everywhere he would go.

"He used to have a place to lie down at de Old Man's feet. De Old Man, he jes 'bout reired him, I guess. 'Course now, My mother, de Old Man bought her.

"My father used to follow de Old Man everywhere he go. Sometimes he would go North wid him an my mother would not see him for months. You see, my father was de Old Man's carriage driver.

"I was named for Lucious Lamar who was my uncle's brother up in Georgia. My father didn't want to take de Old Man's name, so he picked out an important one for himself. Steven A. Douglass, or somethin' like dat, was an important man 'way up in de legislature. My father thought him a mighty powerful man, so he picked his name to use. Dat's how come my name to be Lucious Lamar Douglass.

"My grandmother lived to be 100 years old, an so did my father an my uncles. One of dem was 99 when he died. De other one was 95.

"I don't know much 'bout de overseers. I was too young to have much doings wid them. But dey all had a little bit ob hell in 'em. 'Course not all ob dem was mean. De Old Man, he was alright, but de overseer, his name was Blalock, had hell in 'im. Dey haves de same troubles now whar lots ob colored people work at on big farms, only dey calls 'em agents. But dey is overseers jes de same.

"De people, dey worked hard all day but de Old Man he

gave 'em plenty to eat. De overseer wuld git you ef you didn't eat 'nuf. You was working for him an he meant for you to be healthy. We were fed syrup, corn bread, collard an turnip greens, 'taters an meat. Yas sir, de Old Man, he planted plenty of acres of stuff fo' his colored people to eat.

"De Old Man, he clothed his people well, too. 'Course it weren't nothin' extra, but we had shoes an hats, besides. An you knows colored people sure thinks plenty ob dey shoes and hats. Christmas time? Yas, yes, de Old Man sure gives somethin' extra den. He give de women folk all new dresses made out ob calico or somethin' like dat, you know. You see, de Old Man had a factory an made clothes for all his colored people up in Monticello, Florida. He had lots of colored people workin' for him up dey.

"De Quarters, dey was log houses in rows somethin' like dese here. Dey had a fire place made out ob sticks an clay. De house servants had a good house near de Old Man's, but de field hands lived in de quarters 'bout a mile away.

"When anybody was sick we would have a white doctor. When my mether was sick my grandmother took care ob her. De Old Man, he would send out for her to come and take care ob my mother. Sometimes my grandmother took care ob other sick people, too. You see, my grandmother was Bailey's cook, and dey would let her off.

"Den when any ob the slaves died dey had a colored preacher. Dey carpenters, dey lived on de place, dey made de coakets.

"We had church once 'er twice 'er month. De white preacher, he weren't no good. All he preach about was to serve de white boss, not God. De white boss paid him so he jes come over to de church house an talk a little to us an den go by an git his money and after dat he could go on 'bout his own business. Ef dey had let de colored preachers do all de preachin' to de slaves we'd of had good services all de time."

"How did de slaves git married? Well, you see, de colored people, dey mostly married on Sunday's. No sir, dey didn't git no time off fer dat. Dey jes got married an went on 'bout their business. Dat was all there was to it. De colored preachers, dey 'formed de cernon'y. Jim Page, George Larmore, an Griffin, dey was our colored preachers, and dey was free. No sir, I don't know how come dey was free, dey jes was."

"De Mistress, she taught us Sunday School, an all us colored children would come 'cause she give us all biscuits afterwards. I 'member dat. 'Course we had church, too, 'bout twice a month. De white preacher, he preach to de whites in de afternoon and to de colored folks at night on Sundays. 'Cept sometime when de colored preacher do de preachin'. Den we'd have a fine service, sure 'nuff. All de colored people had to be in de quarters by sun down 'cept on Sundays when we'd go to church."

"No sir, we weren't taught to read an write, an' you'd better not be caught tryin' either. An de reason was simply dis, you see, any colored person had to have a pass to go any where off de plantation where he lived, and ef he could write,

well, he could ^{write} hisself out a pass. You had to have a pass of you was sent from one plantation to another. An you had to show it too. Naturally, if de colored people could ef wrote dey'd a been writin' out passes fer thei'sselves an travelin' all 'bout. 'Course, some ob de poor whites taught der colored people to read an write when dey only had two or three slaves. Yes sir, de slaves run away lots. I never did know any dat did, but I heard dey did. I heard, too, dat de overseers on de small plantations was alright but some ob de ones on de big plantations was mean, so I heard. But I don't know. But I does know dat we didn't ever have to work on Sundays, 'cept sometime durin' fodder savin' time, or somethin' like dat.

"Yes sir, de colored people loved to dance den jes like dey does now. Dey used to dance at night even ef dey had worked hard all day in de fields. De young people, dey would dance going home from work out of de fields. De overseer, he had to go right along wid de hands from de field, an de young people, dey dance all 'round him, but he don't care. De days work an done, so let 'em dance.

"Yes sir, I 'members de war. I 'members we sure was glad to git free, too. All ob our people was glad to get free. I know de Old Man, he didn't like it, but he had to take it jes de same. When General Cook's Army come out into de fields to tell us dat we was free, de Old Man, he come wid him, an told us hisself.

"Den in 1861 I was in Leon County at de farm set aside fer
Dena was 'bout 40 or 50 colored people there.

"De biggest mistake my father ever made was to leave de Old Man after de war. He might of left him a farm or somethin' or he'd a staid wid 'im instead of leaving as soon as he was free. I always told my father dat was de biggest mistake he ever made in his whole life time. De Old Man would of fed and clothed him an treated him right, but no, he thought since he was free he could do better off by hisself. But he soon found out he couldn't an come back to his old Master. When de Old Man died he was in my father's arms. But he never 'shud gone away in de first place, jes as soon as he was freed. He jes lost dat much time and didn't git nuthin' left to him."

"Dere was one old man on de plantation dat was a boy when de Old Man was a boy. He had him a little farm off by hisself across de fields what de Old Man tinded. De Old Man never did bother him much, 'cept to butcher a few goats or pigs, or somethin' like dat. I think he used to nurse de Old Man when he was little."

"I remember one evenin' jes before sun down, a dirty, tired white man come up to my uncle an me in de field an said he wanted a drink of water. When he got dat he said he wanted somethin' to eat, said he hadn't had anythin' to eat in three whole days. I told him dat my mother lived down in de quarters an I'd go wid him an show him which house she lived in. When she got home from work she give him some stuff to eat. We had plenty of good vittuals. After de strange man had et, one of my married brothers come in. De white man went to his house and staid wid him several weeks. I think he must'a got loose from a prison somewhere in

Alabama. But I don't know fer sure, tho'. I never could understand how he got out, but he staid wid us several month. I don't remember jes how long. But when de Army started comin' thru he hid in de bushes an every once an awhile he would stick out his head an look an wave his arm at de soldiers passing along. An ef dey didn't wave back at him he would jump back among de bushes an de weeds. Den one day he was waving at some soldiers passing 'long an, lo-an-to-behold dey waved back at him. He up an jumps out ob dem bushes and joined de soldiers. I never knew what becom' ob him. I've often wished I did, fer I thought maybe he had got hold of some money er somethin' like dat an would give me some of it.

"Yes, we thought a lot ob de Yankee soldiers, why shouldn't we? Look what dey did fer us. Dey Yankees took charge ob all de government buildings but dey never did do nuthin'.

"No, de Klu Klux was'nt in our county much. Any how, it didn't live long. De colored people soon broke dat up, 'least dey thought dey did. When dey would know where dar meetings would be at de colored people would gather and go dar an soon have de Klu Klux on de go. No decent white man was hardly ever a Klu Klux. De Old Men an his sons wouldn't think ob sich a thing. It was mostly de poor white trash and de old overseers dat jined de Klu Klux.

"After we were free things went alright. All dough some ob de white folks told us we'd starve an everythin' like dat. But we didn't. We got along all right. An we didn't need de

overseers when we worked fer de Old Man, either. I tells you, sir, God will surely provide fer His chilluns. Dat He will. God will certainly provide. I don't care how things may look at times, He will provide fer you.

"I likes dis way best. Things are so much different now. Yes sir, sometimes dey usta have to whip some ob de colored folks. Some of de overseers would whip dem til dey couldn't hardly stan' up. But dey better not break de skin nor actually hurt one ob de colored people. Ef dey did Old Man Bailey would git dem right now. Sometimes it was actually necessary to whi some ob de slaves, an dat was alright when dey needed it.

"Course I never seed any one git whipped. I jes heard about it. None ob it never happened on de plantation where I was at, but I did hear talk of it.

"But, I'll tell you, dey colored people, dey needs whippins worse now than dey did dem. I knows plenty ob colored people who a good sound whippin sure would do a lot of good, right here in Orlando."