

### Journal C of Station No. 2

William Still

1852-1857

#### Vigilance Committee of Philadelphia, PAS Papers, HSP

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March 1<sup>st</sup> 1855

Arrived, Mary Epps, new name Emma Brown & Joseph & Robert Robinson. Safely arrived, Mary from Petersburg & the other two from Richmond Va.

Mary is 45 yrs of age, dark Complexion, round built, intelligent & genteel. She had been owned by Littleton Reeves, deceased, whom she represented as having been kind to her but her mistress had always been very hard; being of a jealous disposition she caused M. to be hired out with a hard family w(h)ere she was much abused, had frequently suffered from severe floggings, been stinted<sup>1</sup> for food, &c. She has been the mother of 15 children, 4 of whom had been sold away from her, one is still held in Petersburg, the others are all dead. At the sale of one of her children "she grieved was thrown into such a state of grief that she lost speech for a month in consequence thereof, Convulsions was very frequently brought on." Her husband Frances 6 yrs a slave also, paid \$100 for her passage here hoping that by sending her on head the chance for himself could the more easily be obtained.

Joseph is near 30 yrs of age, dark orange Complexion, medium size, very active & intelligent, with genteel address. He had in the course of his life been sold on the auction block 3 times and each successive time had the misfortune to fall into the hands of a Cruel Master. Consequently, he was denied all priviledges, Sundays or week days alike he was kept lightly on ? Had frequently been knocked & beaten shamefully. He was a married man, and spoke highly of his wife though when he left he did not feel at liberty to apprise her of his movements fearing that it would not be safe so to do. He left behind four little children to whom he seemed ardently attached. He said he stuck to them as long as he could- Geo. E. Sadler was the man whom he was compelled to call Master. He was the keeper of an oyster house. The bad treatment which he daily received was the cause of his leaving. The name of his wife was Betsy.

Robert Slater, the trader. He is 22 yrs of age dark orange Color, intelligent genteel, & good looking, single man for eight yrs he had been employed at the Slave Prison. His duty was to lock up the Prison, prepare the slaves for sale &c &c. A very thrilling description of the treatment of slaves in various ways was detailed. The custom of greasing & other modes to brighten the salves up for sale was also related. Females as well as males were not uncommonly stripped naked, lashed flat to a bench and then held by 2 men- sometimes 4- whilst<sup>2</sup> the trader would flog them unmercifully with a broad leather strap- the strap was used in the place of a cow skin to keep from cutting the skin which would spoil the sale. One hundred lashes would only be a common flogging. The separation of families was thought nothing of- Robt. had on several occasions been severely flogged for refusing to flog others. He was the "turn key" of the prison. Most sickening were the scenes by himself as he described them, which he was daily obliged to witness.

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<sup>1</sup> To restrict or limit

<sup>2</sup> whilst- at the same time as

March 7<sup>th</sup> 1855  
(3) Arrived, Mary Epps, new Name Emma  
Brown, & Joseph & Robert Robinson. Mary  
safely arrived, Mary from Petersburg  
& the other two from Richmond Va.  
Mary is 45 yrs of age; dark complexion,  
sound limb, intelligent & genteel. She had  
been owned by Sittleton Reeves, deceased, who  
she represented as having been kind to her,  
but her distress had always been very hard;  
being of a jealous disposition she caused M. to  
be hired out, with a hard family where she  
was much abused: she frequently suffered  
from severe floggings, been starved for food &c.  
She had been the mother of 15 children, 4 of whom  
had been sold away from her, one is still held  
in Petersburg, the others are all dead. At the  
fate of one of her children she grieved <sup>up</sup> as though  
into such a state of grief that she lost <sup>for a month</sup> the speech  
in consequence thereof. Consultations was very fre-  
quently brought on. Her husband Francisco Epps,  
a slave felon, paid \$100. for her passage here,  
hoping that by landing her on head the chance



For himself could the more easily be obtained.  
Joseph is near 30 yrs of age,  
dark orange complexion, medium size,  
very active & intelligent, with gentle address.  
He had, in the course of his life, been sold  
on the Auction block 3 times, and each  
successive time had the misfortune to fall  
into the hands of a cruel Master. Consequently  
he was denied all privileges, Sundays or  
week<sup>days</sup>, alike he was kept tightly on Ind. <sup>day</sup>.  
Had frequently been knocked & beaten shamefully.  
He was a married man, and spoke highly of  
his wife though <sup>when</sup> he left he did not  
feel at liberty to apprise her of his movements  
fearing that it would not be safe to do.  
He left behind four little children, to whom  
he seemed ardently attached. He lived the better part  
to them as long as he could. Geo. E. Sadler  
was the man whom he was compelled  
to call Master, he was the Keeper of  
an Oyster House. The bad treatment  
which he daily received was the cause  
of his leaving.



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The name of his wife was Betty  
Robert Slater, the Trader. He is  
22 yrs of age dark orange color, intelligent  
of good looking, <sup>single man</sup> for eight yrs he had  
been employed at the Slave Prison. His duty  
was to look up the prisoners prepare the slaves  
for sale, by &c. A very thrilling description  
of the treatment of slaves, in various ways  
was detailed. The Custom of greasing & other  
works to brighten the slaves - for sale was  
also related. Females as well as Males  
were not uncommonly stripped naked,  
lashed flat to a bench and then held by  
2 men some times 4 - whilst the Trader would  
flag them unmercifully with a brand  
water strap - the strap was used in the  
place of a Cow skin, to keep from cutting  
the skin, which would spoil the sale. One hund-  
red lashes would only be a common  
flogging. The separation of families was  
thought nothing of - Robert had on some  
occasions, been severely flogged for refusing to flog others.  
He was the "Key" of the Prison. Most look, <sup>with</sup> the trader to  
self, as he did them which he was duty obliged to witness.