

MEMORANDUM

June 9, 1937

TO: STATE DIRECTORS OF THE FEDERAL WRITERS' PROJECT

FROM: Henry G. Alsberg, Director

In connection with the stories of ex-slaves, please send in to this office copies of State, county, or city laws affecting the conduct of slaves, free Negroes, overseers, patrollers, or any person or custom affecting the institution of slavery. It will, of course, not be necessary to send more than one copy of the laws that were common throughout the state, although any special law passed by a particular city would constitute worthwhile material.

In addition, we should like to have you collect and send in copies of any laws or accounts of any established customs relating to the admission to your State of bodies of slaves from Africa or other sections, the escape of slaves, etc. Also, we should like to see copies of advertisements of sales of slaves, published offers of rewards for fugitive slaves, copies of transfers of slaves by will or otherwise, records of freeing of slaves, etc. Public records of very particular interest regarding any transaction involving slaves should be photostated and copies furnished to the Washington office.

Furthermore, contemporary accounts of any noteworthy occurrences among the Negroes during slavery days or the Reconstruction period should be copied, if taken from contemporary newspapers. If such records have been published in books, a reference to the source would be sufficient. We have been receiving a large number of extremely interesting stories of ex-slaves. The historic background of the institution of slavery, which should be disclosed with the information we are now requesting, will be very helpful in the execution of the plans we have in mind.

Copies sent to:

Alabama	Georgia	Maryland	North Carolina	Tennessee
Arkansas	Kentucky	Mississippi	Oklahoma	Texas
Florida	Louisiana	Missouri	South Carolina	Virginia
				West Virginia
				Ohio
				Kansas