



# Bought and Sold

The excerpts below are from "Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1938." The collection contains more than 2,300 first-person accounts of slavery and 500 photographs of former enslaved people, and can be found at <https://www.loc.gov/collections/slave-narratives-from-the-federal-writers-project-1936-to-1938/about-this-collection>.

**Fountain Hughes, Baltimore, Maryland, Age 101** (at time of interview)

"My name is Fountain Hughes. I was born in Charlottesville, Virginia. My grandfather belonged to Thomas Jefferson. My grandfather was 115 years old when he died, and now I am 101 year old. Now in my boy days, we were slaves. We belonged to people. They'd sell us like they sell horses and cows and hogs and all like that, have an auction bench. Put you up on the bench and bid on you the same as you're bidding on cattle, you know. But still, I don't like to talk about it, because it makes people feel bad."



**Hannah Travis, Little Rock, Arkansas, Age 73**

"Didn't nobody have any rights then. They would just put 'em up on a block and auction them off. The one that give the most he would take 'em. Didn't nobody have no schooling only white folks. The white children would go to school but they didn't allow [Black children] to go."

**Will Ann Rogers, Brinkley, Arkansas, Age 70**

"When ma was a young woman, she said they put her on a block and sold her. They auctioned her off at Richmond, Virginia. When they sold her, her mother fainted or dropped dead, she never knowed which. She wanted to go see her mother lying over there on the ground and the man what bought her wouldn't let her. He just took her on. Drove her off like cattle, I reckon. The man what bought her was Ephram Hester. That the last she ever knowed of any of her folks. She say he mated 'em like stock so she had one boy. He livin' down here at Helena now. He is Mose Kent. He was born around Richmond, Virginia jes' lack dat she say."

**Violet Shaw, West Memphis, Arkansas, Age 50**

"I heard Grandma Katie Williams say she was put up on a high stump and auctioned off. She told how great-grandma cried and cried and never seen her no more. Grandma come from Oakland, Tennessee to Mississippi. Grandma took the two young children and left the other two with great-grandma. They took her from her husband. She never seen none of them again. After freedom she didn't know how to find them. She never could get trace of them. She tried. She never married no more."

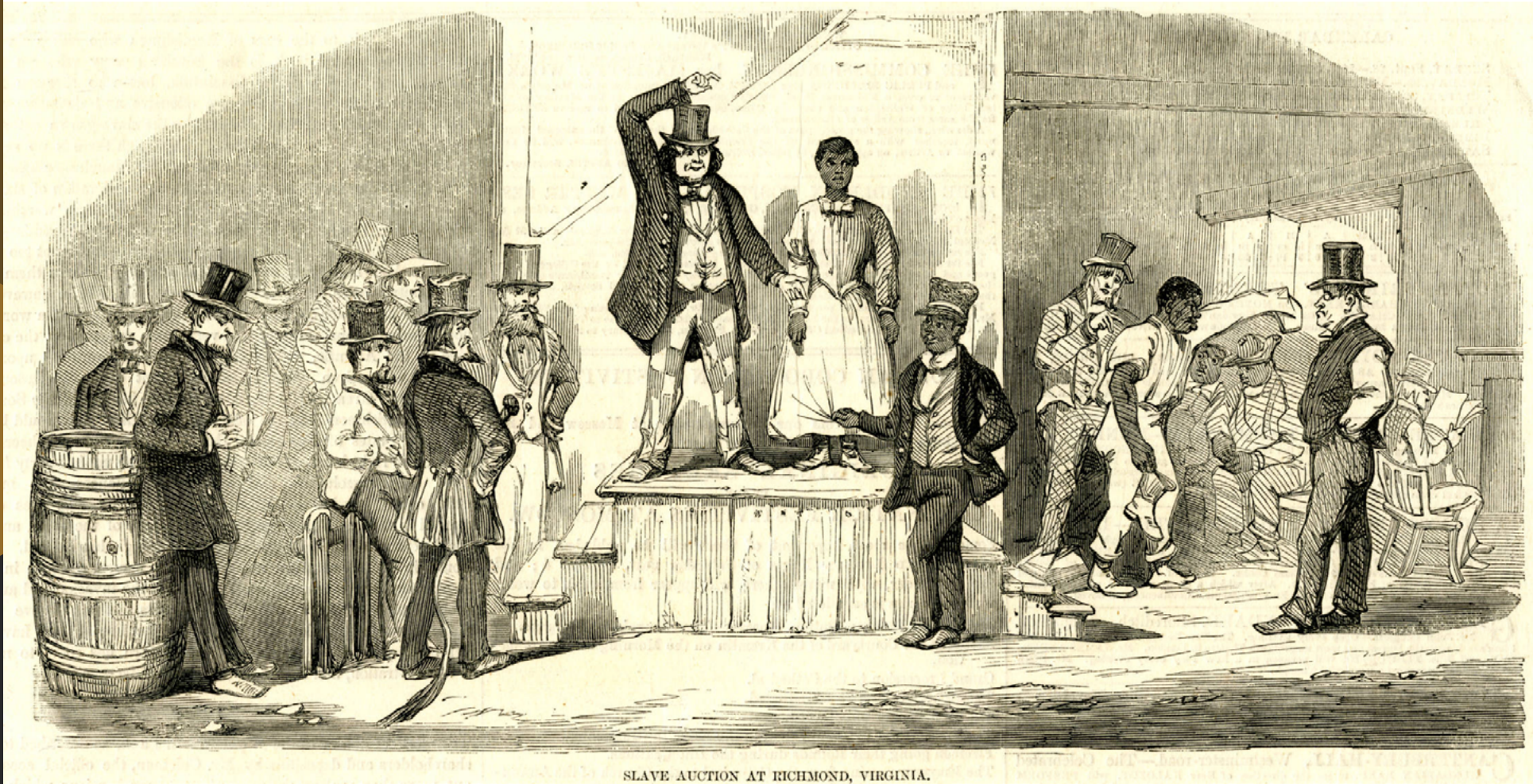
**William Henry Rooks, Brinkley, Arkansas, Age 84**

"Some of the white men had a hundred slaves and had plenty money. The war broke nearly all of them. The very worse thing I ever knowed about it was some white men raised hands to sell like they raise stock now. It was hard to have your child took off and never see or hear tell of it. Mean man buy it and beat it up. Some of them was drove off to be sold at auction at New Orleans. That was where some took them 'cause they could get big money for them."

Photograph of Fountain Hughes courtesy of The Jeffersonian newspaper, Towson, Maryland.  
Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:FountainHughes.jpg>.



## Bought and Sold: Slave Auction at Richmond, Virginia



Author: VCU Libraries Commons; source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/vcucommons/17243519918>





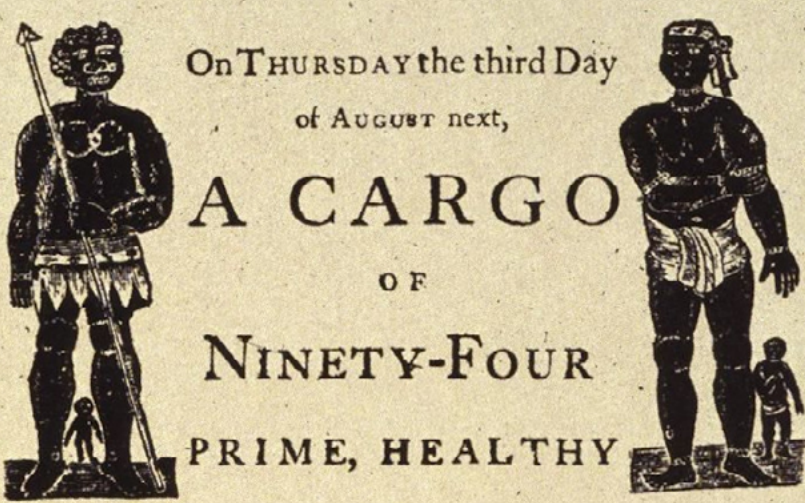
## Bought and Sold: Reproduction of a handbill advertising a slave auction in Charleston, South Carolina, 1769

Charlestown, July 24th, 1769.

TO BE SOLD,

On THURSDAY the third Day  
of AUGUST next,

A CARGO  
OF  
NINETY-FOUR  
PRIME, HEALTHY



NEGROES,

CONSISTING OF  
Thirty-nine MEN, Fifteen BOYS,  
Twenty-four WOMEN, and  
Sixteen GIRLS.

JUST ARRIVED,  
In the Brigantine *DEMBIA*, *Francis Bare*, Master, from SIERRA-  
LEON, by  
DAVID & JOHN DEAS.

SOURCE: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Slave\\_Auction\\_Ad.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Slave_Auction_Ad.jpg)