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Traces: Slavery at Ashland

Guidelines for Discussing Slavery at Ashland

Discussing difficult history with your students can be challenging. We have developed a set of guidelines that can assist with your instruction. These guidelines, adapted from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's Guidelines for Teaching about the Holocaust, are just that – guidelines. They were created to help you develop a methodologically sound and safe learning environment for your students.

Click [here](#) to access a PowerPoint version of the Guidelines for Discussing Slavery at Ashland. These guidelines were created to help support your teaching practice by guiding you to teach this difficult topic. Below, you will find biographies of enslaved people at Ashland as well as photographs, primary source documents, and artifacts that can enhance our teaching.

Biographies

AARON DUPUY (c. 1788 – 1866)



Aaron Dupuy was enslaved by Henry Clay as a valet. One of only two known images of the enslaved at Ashland. Courtesy of University of Kentucky Department of Special Collections.

Aaron Dupuy was born in Hanover County, Virginia around 1788. Sources indicate he was connected to Henry Clay's family, and that he was 11 years younger than Henry Clay. According to Aaron's obituary, he was 78 when he died. The first record of Aaron's enslavement comes from an entry in one of Henry Clay's account books. Clay received 10 pounds for the leasing of Aaron's labor in 1799. In January 1802, when Aaron was about 14 years old his labor was leased again for five years, this time to Henry Clay's brother-in-law. Around that time, Aaron met an enslaved woman named Charlotte who was laboring in a tailor's shop in Downtown Lexington. Aaron and Charlotte married in 1806.

Aaron served as the personal valet and coach driver for Henry Clay. Aaron traveled to Washington D.C. when Clay was Secretary of State, and he also went to Portugal with the family of one of Henry Clay's sons. While Aaron's wife Charlotte and their children, Charles and Mary Anne, were manumitted by Henry Clay, there is no indication that Aaron was ever freed before the Emancipation Proclamation in 1865. Aaron died on February 6, 1866, while living with another of Henry Clay's sons. According to Aaron's obituary, he was survived by his wife Charlotte, their daughter Mary Anne, and their grandchildren.

CHARLOTTE “LOTTY” DUPUY (c. 1788 -?)



Decatur house c. 1822



Decatur House slave quarters

Charlotte "Lotty" Dupuy was born in Maryland around 1788. Enslaved by the same person from birth, at seven years old Charlotte was sold for \$100 and transported to Lexington, Kentucky. Charlotte's new enslaver then hired her out to work in a tailor shop in downtown Lexington. While working there, Charlotte met Aaron Dupuy. Aaron was enslaved by Henry Clay, who had hired him out to work in a nail factory downtown. Charlotte married Aaron, and in 1806, to be with her husband, she convinced her enslaver to sell her to Henry Clay. Henry Clay paid \$450 to buy Charlotte. In the Clay household, Charlotte labored as a cook, housekeeper, and caretaker to the family. She and Aaron had two children, Charles and Mary Anne.

In 1829, Charlotte brought a lawsuit against Henry Clay for her freedom and the freedom of her children. By this time, Henry Clay had been Secretary of State since 1825. Charlotte and her family had traveled with the Clays to Washington, D.C., and were living at Decatur House at the time of her lawsuit. Although Charlotte's freedom suit went to trial, the court found that she and her children had no rightful claim to freedom. After losing her suit, Charlotte refused to return to Ashland and was jailed as a result. Clay later sent Charlotte to New Orleans, Louisiana to labor for his relatives. Charlotte was separated from her family for over three years. In 1840, Charlotte and her daughter Mary Ann were freed by Henry Clay. In 1844, Clay freed Charlotte's son Charles. Charlotte's husband Aaron was never freed by the Clays.

The date of Charlotte's death and the place where she is buried is unknown.

CHARLES DUPUY (c. 1807 – c. 1860)



Charles Dupuy by John Neagle. One of only two known images of the enslaved at Ashland.

Charles Dupuy, born about 1807, was the son of Aaron and Charlotte Dupuy. Charles assumed responsibility for his father's role as Henry Clay's valet, and he traveled with Clay to serve him in Washington, D.C. Henry Clay manumitted Charles in 1844, four years after Henry Clay freed Charles' mother Lotty and his sister Mary Ann. Charles continued to work for Henry Clay as a freedman until 1848. A January 1845 issue of the *Lexington Observer and Reporter* stated that Charles received compensation of \$10 per month for his labor.

A census document of Free Inhabitants of Washington, D.C dated July 1850 lists a Charles "Dupuis" aged 40 and born in Kentucky with the following family:

Amelia Dupuis – Wife aged 35; born in Maryland

Charlotte Dupuis – Daughter aged 15; born in Kentucky

Charles A. Dupuis – Son aged 13; born in Kentucky

William A. Dupuis – Son aged 8; born in Kentucky

Virginia Dupuis – Daughter aged 5; born in Kentucky

David Dupuis – Son aged 3; born in Kentucky

Sarah Dupuis – Daughter aged 4 months; born in Washington, D.C.

Charles's date of death is unknown. His father Aaron's obituary made no mention of Charles and listed his wife Charlotte, daughter Mary Anne, and grandchildren as surviving him. Charles does not appear in the 1860 U.S. census and may have died between 1850 and 1860.

MARY ANNE DUPUY

(c. 1809 -?)

Mary Anne was the daughter of Aaron and Charlotte Dupuy and the sister of Charles Dupuy. Mary Anne's duties are not specified but she may have helped her mother with cooking and likely helped look after Clay's grandchildren. Mary Anne had one son, Henry, born in 1833. In 1840 Mary Ann and her mother Charlotte were freed. In their Deed of Emancipation, it specifically stated that her son Henry was not freed. What happened to Mary Anne after she was freed is unknown. In her father Aaron's 1866 obituary, Mary Anne is mentioned as a surviving family member.

HENRY DUPUY

(c. 1833 -?)

Henry Dupuy was Mary Anne's son, and little is known about him other than that Henry Clay sold Henry Dupuy in July of 1848, at the age of 15. In the deed of sale for Henry Dupuy, he is identified as "mulatto" (mixed race), and though Henry's father is unknown, his mother was identified as Black, which means Henry's father would have been either mixed race or white. Though the circumstances around Henry's sale are unknown, he was sold to a man in Louisville, and Henry Clay made a condition of Henry Dupuy's sale that he was to be free at the age of 28.

In May 1850, in a Clay family letter, Henry Dupuy was described as: "tall but...not...stout." This is the last known reference to Henry Dupuy. Whether he was ever freed or survived to see the end of slavery is unknown.

LEWIS RICHARDSON

(c. 1792 -?)



The smokehouse at Ashland where Louis Richardson would have been tasked with killing hogs.

Lewis Richardson was enslaved at Ashland from around 1837 to January 1846. He escaped from Ashland via the Underground Railroad and made his way to Amherstburg, Ontario, Canada. In Amherstburg, he delivered a speech about his enslavement at Ashland as well as his escape. Richardson's speech was published in an abolitionist newspaper entitled the *Signal of Liberty*. In his speech, Richardson said that he was 53 years old at the time of his escape.




Lewis Richardson was born in 1792 at Poplar Hill, in Fayette County, Kentucky. All accounts indicate that he resisted enslavement continuously throughout his life through many means including escape and violence. In December 1845, according to Lewis Richardson's speech, on one Sunday he went to visit his wife who was enslaved on a farm several miles from Ashland. Lewis was expected to return to Ashland by 5 am Monday, but he returned at 6:02 am. Richardson was met by the angry overseer and was stripped and lashed for being late. He decided to attempt escape before being sold further south or killed. Lewis Richardson made his way along the Underground Railroad to Amherstburg, Ontario, Canada, a primary place of entry for people escaping from slavery. On March 13, 1846, Lewis delivered a speech about his escape, his life, and his feelings about Ashland. In that speech, Richardson relayed the facts of his escape and why he attempted it. He also provided insights into slavery at Ashland, noting how meager the food and clothing provided for the enslaved were and that it was not the paradise that it was made out to be.

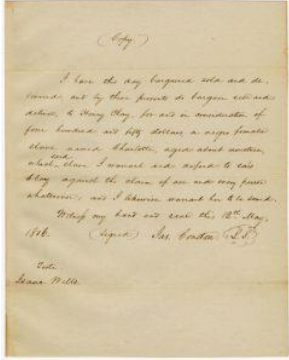
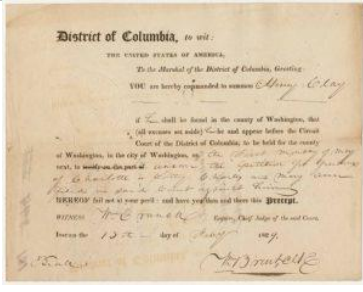
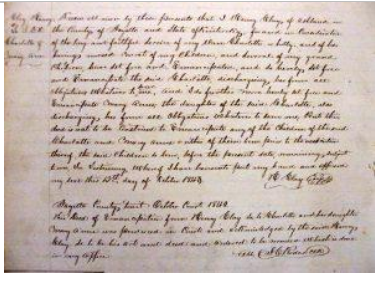
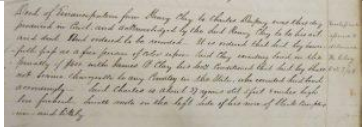
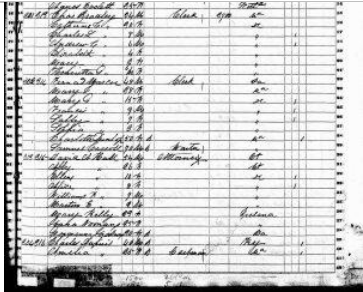
The speech of Lewis Richardson in March 1846 is the last record of him. Nothing is known of his life after it or his death. Nor is anything more known about the wife he left behind.

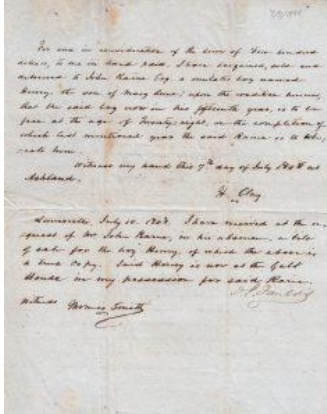

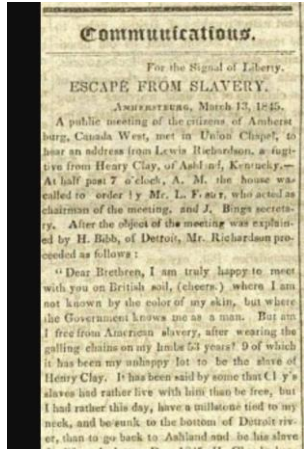
DOWNLOAD LEWIS RICHARDSON'S SPEECH (TEXT) [HERE](#)

**DOWNLOAD LEWIS RICHARDSON'S SPEECH
(AUDIO INTERPRETED BY ACTOR WHIT WHITAKER) [HERE](#)**

Maps, Images, & Primary Sources

Item	Description	Date	Courtesy Of	Image	Web Link
1	Indentation from the old farm road. The slave cabins where the Dupuy family lived were located just to the right of the road, near where the formal garden sits today.	Modern			https://bit.ly/3aC1D2S
2	Aaron Dupuy's hire record. You can see his name just above the mid-line on the left-hand page	1799	University of Kentucky Libraries Department of Special Collections		
3	Aaron Dupuy drove Henry Clay's coach	1833			https://bit.ly/3h9vojA
4	Aaron Dupuy's obituary	Feb.17, 1866	Richmond Dispatch Richmond, VA	<p>hearststones.</p> <p>DIED, at Ashland, Ky., on the 6th instant, Aaron Dupee, aged seventy-eight years, for a long time a faithful servant of the late Hon. Henry Clay. He was born in Hanover county, Va., and came to Kentucky about the close of the last century, in the family of the mother of Mr. Clay. His many and long tried services in the family to which he belonged fully entitle him to the most grateful and affectionate remembrance of those surviving. He leaves an aged widow, a daughter, and grand children, who deplore his loss here, but hope to join him hereafter.—<i>Exchange</i>.</p> <p>Aaron was well known to all intimate friends of Mr. Clay. He was his body-servant up to the time of his death, accompanied him to Europe during his diplomatic visit to that country, and was constantly in attendance on him at Washington. He was a sample of the choicest production of the African race—an old-fashioned Virginia family servant.—<i>Petersburg Intell.</i></p>	https://bit.ly/31P2tnq

5	Lotty's document of sale from James Condon to Henry Clay.		National Archives		
6	Document summoning Henry Clay to court to answer Lotty's petition for freedom.		National Archives		
7	Emancipation document for Lotty and Mary Anne.		Fayette County Clerk's Office		
8	Emancipation document for Charles Dupuy.		Fayette County Clerk's office		
9	Charles Dupuy's 1850 census record where he is listed as a cartman living in Washington D.C. (Bottom of page).	1850	US Census Records National Archives		

10	Bill of sale for Henry Dupuy from Henry Clay.	1848	Transylvania University Library Special Collections		
11	Map of frequent Underground Railroad routes. Notice central Kentucky's path leads to Amherstburg, Ontario.				https://bit.ly/2WBjxuv
12	Lewis Richardson's speech and meeting notes from the Signal of Liberty newspaper	March 30, 1846	Ann Arbor District Library		https://bit.ly/3ivZXbi

Guiding Questions

Use information from the Traces: Slavery at Ashland tour and bios to help answer the following questions.

1. How did enslaved people at Ashland show resilience?
2. Name three instances of resistance mentioned in the tour.
3. Why do we no longer refer to enslaved people as “slaves?”
4. Give an example of how an individual or group acted as a bystander.
5. Give an example of how someone or a group acted as an upstander.

Vocabulary

1. **Abolition** – The action or an act of formally putting an end to a system, practice, or institution.
2. **Artifact** – An object that has historical significance and helps us to learn about the past.
3. **Bystander** – A person who sees a wrong taking place, but chooses not to act to intervene.
4. **Chattel slavery** – The system of slavery practiced in the United States until 1865. Human beings were bought and sold as personal property. People enslaved as chattel could not make decisions for their own lives and did not own their own bodies. Chattel slavery was an economic system based on the exploitation of human beings for their labor.
5. **Emancipation** – The process of freeing enslaved people through government action
6. **Enslaver** – An enslaver is a person who enslaves other human beings. An enslaver buys, sells, inherits, trades, or bestows human beings as property.
7. **Exploitation** – The act of using someone unfairly to benefit from their labor.
8. **Freedman** – A formerly enslaved person who is now manumitted, emancipated, or free.
9. **Freedom** – The state of having the power to make decisions for yourself and act on your behalf.
10. **Overseer** – A person who manages work. At Ashland, overseers were white men who supervised the labor of the enslaved people.
11. **Manumission** – The act of freeing enslaved people, not through government action but voluntarily by individual enslavers
12. **Primary Source** – A written account from someone who had a firsthand connection to the events, ex. diaries, letters, original documents.
13. **Resilience** – The ability to recover from and fight through difficulties.
14. **Resistance** – The refusal to accept circumstances and act to change circumstances. For example, some enslaved people resisted their enslavement through escape.
15. **Underground Railroad** – A network of secret routes and safe houses used by people to escape their enslavement.
16. **Upstander** – Someone who sees a wrong and chooses to act to intervene.
17. **Valet** – A man’s male attendant who is responsible for clothing and appearance.

Videos

Slavery at Ashland Video: <https://bit.ly/3l4MLvY>