



FREE? HENRY ADAMS STATEMENT

(FORMER SLAVE) - 1880

Former slave Henry Adams made this statement before the U.S. Senate in 1880 about the early days of his freedom after the Civil War.

In September 1865 I asked the boss to let me go to the city of Shreveport. He said, "All right, when will you come back?" I told him "next week." He said, "You had better carry a pass." I said, "I will see whether I am free by going without a pass."

I met four white men about six miles south of town. One of them asked me who I belonged to. I told him no one. So him and two others struck me with a stick and told me they were going to kill me and every other black who told them that they did not belong to anyone. They left me and I then went on to Shreveport. I saw over twelve colored men and women, beat, shot and hung between there and Shreveport.

Sunday I went back home. The boss was not at home. I asked the madam [the boss's wife], "where was the boss?" She said, "You should say 'master'. You all are not free . . . and you shall call every white lady 'missus' and every white man 'master.'" During the same week the madam took a stick and beat one of the young colored girls, who was about fifteen years of age. The boss came the next day and whipped the same girl nearly to death. . . . After the whipping a large number of young colored people decided to leave that place for Shreveport. [On our way], out came about forty armed white men and shot at us and took my horse. They said they were going to kill every colored person they found leaving their masters.

1. What type of document is this? _____
2. When was it written? _____
3. What methods are used by white southerners to control newly freed African Americans? _____

4. If you were a newly freed slave 1865, would you stay with your former owner or chance going out on your own? Explain. _____

5. a. What would happen if African Americans left the South in huge numbers? _____

 - b. Underline the text that supports your answer
6. Were African Americans free during after in the late 1800s? Support with text evidence. _____

