THE NEGRO IN RICHMOND ON THE EVE OF

AND DURING THE CIVIL WAR

by

G. H. Reid
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G. H. Reid
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Chapter I
Population

Richmond, the capital of Virginia, had a total population of 27,570 in 1850. (1) Of this number there were 15,274 white people and 12,296 Negroes. There were 2,369 free colored of which 1,075 were males and 1,294 females. This gave Richmond a total free population of 17,643. Of the 9,927 Negro slaves within the city 5,307 were males and 4,620 were females. These figures show that just eleven years before the beginning of the Civil War the population of Richmond was forty-four per cent Negro. Nineteen per cent of the Negro population, or eight per cent of the total population, came within the classification of free Negroes.

During the ten year period from 1850 - 1860 Richmond grew until she boasted of a total population of 37,910 in 1860. (2) Included in the above number were 23,635 whites and 14,275 or thirty-seven per cent Negroes. Of the Negro population 11,699 or eighty-one per cent were slaves and 2,576 or nineteen per cent were free. These figures show that the white population was increasing more rapidly than the Negroes because the Negroes in 1850 made up forty-four per cent of the total population and in 1860 they represented only thirty-seven per cent or a decrease of seven per cent.

In regard to percentage of free Negroes Richmond was

(1) United States Census of 1850, P. 258.
(2) United States Census of 1860.
below the average for the majority of Virginia cities. (3)

In 1860, as stated above, nineteen per cent of Richmond's Negro population were free. At the same time Alexandria had fifty per cent of its Negro population free, Winchester forty-nine per cent, Petersburg thirty-six per cent, Fredericksburg twenty-five per cent, Norfolk twenty-four per cent, and Lynchburg thirteen per cent. Though below the average for the cities of the State, Richmond was above the average for the State as a whole which had a total population of 1,658,190 of which 1,087,918 were whites, 59,118 free Negroes, and 511,154 slaves. (4) These figures show thirteen per cent of Virginia's Negro population to be free. The same census shows that thirty-four per cent of the total population of Virginia were Negroes.

(3) Jackson, Luther P. - "Mammonism In Certain Virginia Cities" - Journal of Negro History, Vol. 15, 1930, Foot note P. 236
(4) United States Census of 1860.
Chapter II
Religious and Social Life

During the ten year period preceding the beginning of the Civil War there was great growth in the number of Negro Churches throughout the entire State. (1) The white churches of Richmond were led by the Baptist in their efforts to uplift the Negro. Especially was this true of the First Baptist Church which in reality is the mother of the First African Baptist Church which was established in 1841.

The First African Baptist Church of Richmond was founded because of the overcrowding of the white membership in the First Baptist Church by the overwhelming Negro membership. The Negroes, just prior to the establishing of a church for them by the whites, outnumbered the white membership in the First Baptist Church by about five to one. (2) Largely because of this condition and because the church officials felt that both races could accomplish much more if they had separate churches, the white membership of the First Baptist Church decided to build a new building and sell the old one to the Negroes. The question of whether or not the law of the State would allow a distinct organization for colored worshippers caused much discussion. This was finally settled after consulting some of the ablest lawyers of the city. The First

(2) Ibid- P. 254
Church determined to guard against possible danger of violating the state law by appointing a committee of eighteen men (twelve from the First Baptist Church, four from the Second Baptist, two from the then Third Baptist but now Grace) to act as supervisors of the African Church. This committee was to elect the pastor, and two of them were to be present with him at all the gatherings for public worship. (3) Dr. Jeter, the pastor of the First Baptist Church, wrote the constitution for the African Church. "It provided for the selection of thirty deacons from among the colored members, and a white pastor, by the Supervising Committee, subject to the approval of the whole colored membership." (4) The Board of deacons and the pastor constituted the ruling power in the church, however, unsatisfactory decisions made by these could be appealed to the Supervising Committee. Dr. Robert Ryland, then the President of Richmond College, was chosen as the first pastor of the First African Baptist Church and entered upon his duties as the pastor of the First Negro Church in Richmond on the first Sunday in October, 1841. (5) There were about one thousand members on the roll of this newly organized congregation. In this action of the First Baptist Church of Richmond may be found the movement which was soon to lead to the establishment of other churches for the colored population of Richmond.

(3) Ryland, Robert- Origin and History of the First African Baptist Church, P. 249.
(4) Ibid - P. 251.
By 1860 the Richmond Directory listed four African Baptist Churches and one African Methodist Church. (6) Alongside of the four African Baptist Churches were four white Baptist Churches each of which supervised one of the African Churches much in the same way as the First African Church was supervised by the First Baptist. (7) In addition to the African Churches already mentioned there was a Sunday School for Negroes established in 1852 by the St. James Episcopal Church. This Sunday School began with eight teachers and fifty scholars but failed to grow as rapidly as did the Baptist organizations. Interest in uplifting the character of the Negroes is shown by this statement made by the Superintendent of the Episcopal Sunday School, "If every church would establish and sustain one Sunday School, it could not fail to effect a most happy change in the character and habits of servants." (8)

One of the African Baptist Churches found in Richmond in 1860 came into existence as the result of the great increase in membership in the First African Church. By 1855 the membership of this church had increased so that plans were made for the formation of a daughter church. Thus it was that in 1858 the Ebenezer Church was dedicated and placed under the supervision of a white church - a daughter of the

(6) Richmond Directory - 1860 - P.P. 44-45
(8) Ibid - P. 231
First African Church and a grand-daughter of the First Baptist Church. (9)

From the time of its beginning in 1841 until July 1, 1860 there were 3,832 additions to the First African Baptist Church by baptism under the wise and able leadership of Dr. Ryland. The applicants for admission were always required to bring testimonials of good or improving character and each candidate for baptism was examined by some deacon or experienced member. After this examination by one of the brethren the applicants were then brought before the pastor who satisfied himself in regard to their fitness to become members of the church. (10) Once in the church, the Negroes were subject to all the rigid discipline of that body. To inquire into the moral life and soul of its members was one of the main reasons for the existence of the church. Whenever church meetings were held for the airing of charges against any of its members they in no small degree took the aspects of a regular court. Lying, stealing, gambling, fornication, irregular sex habits of any kind, drunkenness, use of profane language, quarreling, fighting, theater and circus attendance, dancing, and mode of dress were all subjects for which church members were brought before the church. Often the accused were given a strong moral lecture and released having thus been humiliated before their church, but

(10) Ibid - P. 262.
in the more serious cases there were instances of excommunication. (11) In regard to the Negroes raising means for meeting church expenditures, Dr. Ryland gives the following explanation concerning his (First African) Church:

(12) Many of the church members were free Negroes who were good mechanics, waiters, drivers, and barbers, and therefore were able to make a living wage. The masters of slaves provided them with food, clothing, shelter, and other necessary provisions, and in addition to this, many of these masters gave their slaves a chance to make a little extra money. In the factories the hands were usually assigned tasks and by working overtime and doing "overwork" were able to make extra money for themselves.

The principal service of the African Churches took place in the afternoon when the greater number of servants were able to attend. (13) Dr. Ryland tells of the difficulty which he had at one time in getting the members of his congregation to get to church for the opening of the service.

(14) At first he thought perhaps the masters were keeping the servants late for work, but upon investigation he found that this was not true. He was also cognizant of the fact that the Negroes were always on time for a funeral or a

(13) Jones - Life in the South - P. 189.
wedding, or at any time they really desired. Finding that attempting to appeal to them and persuade them to be more prompt in attending services was to no avail, he induced the Board of Deacons to order the gates to the churchyard to be closed forty-five minutes after the beginning of services. This was done to exclude the late comers in order that they might not interrupt the sermon. The practice of closing the gates proved effective and the evil being corrected, the rule was suspended after six months.

The sermon by the white pastor was preceded by a song and prayer service which usually lasted for nearly an hour. Though Negroes were never invited to occupy the pulpit, they often took an active part in this song and prayer service. (15) The singing was led by a large number of Negroes belonging to an organized choir. No musical instrument was ever used but there was harmony which was characteristic of the Southern Negroes and extremely pleasing. At times when the large congregation poured out its full soul in some of the old fashioned songs, "There was a sound that reminded one of the 'sound of many waters.'" (16) Alternate hymns and prayers occupied a large portion of the Negro Church service. Many of the able Negro men would be called upon to pray several times at each religious service. They always seemed pleased to be recognized and called upon and

(15) Jones - Life in the South - P. 190
some of them often prayed long prayers, quoting from the Bible and from hymns which they used. During prayers the congregation usually knelt and all through the prayer women would rock, twist and go through all kinds of contortions as if in mortal anguish. They were continually uttering low moans, whines, and even cries which seemed to urge the speaker on with renewed energy as the demonstration and prayer grew louder as they proceeded. (17)

Olmstead tells of a Negro funeral which he witnessed in Richmond in December 1853. (18) The hearse, drawn by two horses, was described as being decent and of the usual type used during that period. The service, held at the grave, was conducted by Negroes with no white persons present except Mr. Olmstead and one other white man, who, though he stayed in the background and had nothing to say, was no doubt an officer or witness of some kind present to fulfill the law which required that at all such meetings or gatherings of Negroes some white person or persons had to be present. (19)

The Negroes on the whole were of very poor appearance though there were a few who were fairly decently dressed and respectable looking. One of these conducted the burial service in a manner which displayed earnestness and solemnity.

(17) Jones - Life in the South - P.P.190 f.f.
(18) Olmstead, Frederick Law - A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States in the Years 1853-1854. P.P. 26 - 30
(19) Acts of the General Assembly 1847 - 1848, P. 120
During the song service one Negro would lead for a while by chanting the words of the song and then the crowd would repeat these in unison in a low mournful chant. When one leader would tire another would take his place. Thus the funeral music, peculiar to the Negro, wild and barbaric, went on for a considerable period of time until the grave had been filled and the mound raised. There was much weeping on the part of the Negro women which at times became very mournful.

Sunday was a gala day for the Negroes in Richmond. Dressed in their finery they would turn out in full force and taking possession of the streets constituted a curious spectacle to strangers. (20) Olmstead said that on such occasions some of the colored people seemed to be dressed in the cast off clothes of the whites. (21) Many of the articles of clothing were of expensive materials and of the latest fashion from the finest French cloth. Embroidered waistcoats, silk hats, and kid gloves were quite common among the well dressed colored men. Not only were the colored men dressed in such finery, but the women were at times dressed in expensive material and also often with good taste. "Many of them were quite attractive in appearance, and some would have produced a decided sensation in any European drawing room". (22) Some of the women wore satin

(20) Richmond Whig and Advertiser - June 19, 1860
(21) Olmstead, Frederick Law - A Journey in the Seabord Slave States in the Years 1853-1854 - P.P. 29-31
(22) Ibid - P. 31
bonnets, handsome veils, silk dresses often sweeping the ground, and carried stylish parasols.

These colored gentry sometimes left visiting cards at each others kitchens, and on the occasion of a wedding, the cards of the two contracting parties were connected by a piece of bright, narrow ribbon. (23)
Chapter III
Slave Trade

Whenever foreigners or visitors from the North came to Richmond one of the chief activities of the city which they expressed a curiosity to see was the selling and hiring of Negro slaves. (1) This business was recognized as of such interest to the general public that the directories of the period usually indicated resident traders. Some of the traders did not like to be listed as such and whenever they dealt in other things they avoided this by being listed as general agents, brokers, commission merchants, or auctioneers. Richmond was considered the best place in the State for the selling of slaves at good prices and without publicity as to ownership. "Speculators, planters, farmers, and urban purchasers of domestic servants for their own use, all preferred to go to Richmond for Negroes, because this indicated a certain social as well as a financial advance." (2)

The marts, offices, and jails for the handling of slaves were not in secret places. The Exchange Hotel, the leading inn in the city at the time, was located on the corner of Franklin and Fourteenth Streets and about the center of the business area of the city. (3) This build-

(1) Bancroft, Frederick L. *Slave Trade in the Old South* P. 95.
(2) Ibid - P. 96
(3) Ibid - P. 95
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ing contained the post-office and the offices of not less than five agents dealing in slaves. In this same immediate neighborhood there were four churches and the City and St. Charles Hotels, at numbers 4 and 8 Fifteenth Street. This street was often referred to as Wall Street because the leading banking houses and brokerage firms of the city were grouped there. Odd Fellow's Hall was midway between Fourteenth and Fifteenth Streets on the corner of Franklin Street and what was known as Locust Alley below and Mayo Alley above Franklin Street. This was a short street but on it could be seen the red flags of many auction houses. In 1860 the Odd Fellow's Hall had become one of the busiest of Richmond's many slave marts with at least six traders on Locust Alley just around the corner from the Hall. (4) Most of these auction rooms were long, bare shop rooms with the back end railed off as an office space. The floors were bare and around the walls seats for from twenty five to fifty people were provided. There was usually one large stove used for heating the room. The auction block was in the rear of the main room and near the improvised office. (5)

Nearby these auction houses or slave marts, often to the rear of them, could be found buildings over the entrance to which could be found the word "jail". These so

(4) Bancroft, Frederick L. - Slave Trade in the Old South P. 99
(5) Ibid P. 103.
called jails were not places where those who had violated some law were kept, but they were a kind of boarding house where slave traders and masters might keep their slaves pending their sale. Some of these jails were operated in connection with the auction houses while others were operated by individuals who made the boarding of slaves their sole business.

The same agents who sold slaves also often acted as rental agencies for the owners of slaves very much as most of the real estate firms of today not only buy and sell real estate but also act as rental agents. Then there were those places that were listed only as rental agents. One of the Richmond newspapers of 1858 carried advertisements for six agencies for the hiring out of Negroes. (6)

1- Robert Lyne, General Agent,
Metropolital Hall,
Franklin Street.

2- G. W. H. Tyler,
Marshall Street, Between 6th and 7th

3- Thomas J. Bagby,
General Agent and Collector,
Wall Street, Between Main and Franklin

4- E. A. J. Clopton,
General Agent and Collector,
Corner of Wall and Franklin Streets.

5- P. M. Tabb and Son.

6- Edward D. Escho,
Fourteenth Street, near Exchange Hotel.

Of the six above named firms, two were known also to engage

(6) Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser, Dec. 23, 1858
in the selling of slaves. These were Tabb and Son and Edward W. Bacho. Perhaps others sold slaves also, but these were the only two so mentioned in this issue of the paper. (7)

Almost every issue of the local papers carried in stereotyped fashion, advertisements of auctioneers that they would offer for sale fifteen-twenty-twenty-five Negroes on a certain date. Sometimes when special lots were sold a brief description of the slaves would be given. The Richmond Business Directory of 1852 contained the names of twenty-eight persons designated as slave traders. (8) No doubt there were many others classed as auctioneers, general agents, or commission merchants who were doing as much slave trading as any of the traders listed, but because they dealt in other forms of trade, they preferred not to be listed solely as slave traders.

By 1860 Richmond’s slave trade was much larger than it had been before. The Directory for 1860 grouped the dealers of the city separately in the following manner: (9) Fifteen Negro traders; fifteen agents, general and collecting; and twenty auctioneers. Five of these firms listed as auctioneers or agents also had a note by their names stating that they sold and hired slaves. Comparing

(7) Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser, Dec. 28, 1856
(8) Bancroft, Frederick L. - Slave Trade in the Old South P.P. 96 f.n.
(9) Ibid P.P. 96 f.f.
the list of firms given in this manner by the Directory with the advertisements appearing in the local papers it is quite evident that not more than a third of the persons dealing in slaves were so listed by the Directory. Bancroft says there was evidently much private buying and selling that involved no publicity. (10) Because of this fact only a part of the trade could be learned from the newspapers and advertisements. In 1856 persons engaged as agents for the hiring of Negroes were required to pay a State license tax of $25.00. (11) In 1862 (12) this tax was increased to $75.00. By 1863 the tax had been increased to $175.00. (13) Not only were these places of business required to pay a State license tax, but they were also taxed by the City of Richmond. In 1859 keepers of Negro jails and agents for the hiring out or selling of slaves were divided into three classes. The first class in each of these groups was required to pay a city tax of $50.00, second class $30.00, and the third class $20.00. At the same time auctioneers were divided into eight classes and were taxed as follows: First class $2,000; second class $1,600; third class $1,200; fourth class $1,000; fifth class $750; sixth class $500; seventh class $250; and eighth class $100. (14) Hirers and sellers

(10) Bancroft, Frederick L. Slave Trade in the Old South P. 96
(11) Acts of General Assembly 1855-1856, P. 14
(12) Acts of General Assembly 1861-1862, P. 15
(13) Acts of Adjourned Session - at Richmond 1863
(14) Richmond City Ordinances 1869, P. 77
of slaves in 1861 were grouped into four classes and taxed as follows: First class $80; second class $50; third class $30; and fourth class $20. (15) Then again in 1863 the tax rate on the first class was increased to $100 while the other three classes remained the same as in 1861. (16)

As has been said before it was almost a daily occurrence to see advertisements of the sale of slaves. The red auctioneer’s flag was a familiar sight along the principal streets of the business area. Whenever such sales were in progress the audiences varied from one or two to a hundred or more. Many of those in the audience were merely spectators, present in an endeavor to satisfy their idle curiosity. Some of the spectators were well dressed and gave the appearance of possessing wealth. (17) The Negroes when brought into the city to be sold were often poorly dressed but when they were presented at the auction block to be sold they were quite different in appearance. Their masters had usually fitted them out in new clothes, simple and inexpensive it is true, but never-the-less comfortable and serviceable. There were several stores in the immediate neighborhood of the slave marts with which the furnishing of such clothing was a special business. (18) The idea back of dressing up the slaves to be sold was that in making a good appearance

(15) Richmond City Ordinances passed March 4, 1861. In Manuscript in City Clerk’s Office, Richmond.
(16) Ibid., passed Feb. 24, 1863
(17) Bancroft, Frederick L. Slave Trade in the Old South, P. 104
(18) Ibid., P. P. 104 - 105
at the block their sale price would be increased more than enough to offset the cost of the new clothes.

The slaves offered for sale were always carefully inspected by prospective buyers. Good health and physical condition were among the primary things that were looked into when a person was buying a slave. Prospective buyers were careful to examine the arms and legs for physical strength. The men and boys were taken to a separate section of the mart, undressed and given a rigid inspection for defects such as scars from floggings, or indications of diseases. The women's backs were also examined for scars from floggings. The slave was questioned closely regarding age, what work he or she had done and could do, where raised and by whom, married or single (if woman, how many children she had), and why he or she was being sold. Through all of this Olmstead says that he saw no apparent unnecessary rudeness or brutal action on the part of those handling the slaves. (19)

I saw no whips, chains, or other engines of force. Nor did such appear to be required. All the lots took their seats on two long forms near the stove; none showed any signs of resistance; nor did any one utter a word. Their manner was that of perfect humility and resignation. (20)

The average prices of slaves during the winter of

(19) Olmstead, Frederick Law - A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States in the Years 1853-1854- P. 39
(20) Ibid, P. 38.
1853-1854 were given by Olmstead as follows: (21)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Price Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best men 18 to 25 yrs</td>
<td>$1200 - $1300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair men 18 to 25 yrs</td>
<td>$950 - $1050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys 5 ft.</td>
<td>$850 - $950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys 4 ft. 6 in.</td>
<td>$700 - $800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys 4 ft. 5 in.</td>
<td>$500 - $600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys 4 ft.</td>
<td>$375 - $450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young women</td>
<td>$800 - $1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls 5 ft.</td>
<td>$750 - $850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls 4 ft. 9 in.</td>
<td>$700 - $750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls 4 ft.</td>
<td>$350 - $452</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the next five years there was a great increase in the prices of slaves as was shown by an editorial in one of the Richmond newspapers. (22) The average prices in 1859 were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Price Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. 1 men</td>
<td>20 to 25 from $1450 - $1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best plough boys</td>
<td>17 to 20 from $1350 - $1425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys from</td>
<td>15 to 17 from $1250 - $1375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys from</td>
<td>12 to 15 from $1100 - $1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best grown girls</td>
<td>17 to 20 from $1275 - $1325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls from</td>
<td>15 to 17 from $1150 - $1250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls from</td>
<td>12 to 15 from $1000 - $1100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the advertisements appearing in the newspapers during the period just prior to the Civil War it seems that the months of December and January were the main hiring months for slaves. The editor of the Richmond Dispatch (January 3, 1853) wrote:

Saturday the streets were thronged with Negroes, hirers, owners, and buyers as is the annual custom. Thousands of dollars changed hands, thousands of Negroes changed homes and masters. During the remainder of this week the streets will be filled with Negroes brought in from the country for hire.

(21) Olmstead, Frederick Law - A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States in the years 1853-1854. P. 58
(22) Richmond Enquirer, July 27, 1859.
Similar statements may be found in other papers and on other days during December and January.

It was also during this period, 1860-1860, that masters permitted their servants to have a voice in the choosing of masters when being hired out. Sometimes the Negroes even went to visit the proposed new home to see how things looked even though the owner and hirer had agreed on the price of hire. Often these Negroes asked for and were granted certain concessions, such as: friends being allowed to see them or that they be allowed to visit friends. (23) In regard to this practice an interesting anecdote is told on Judge Lomax. (24) The Judge desiring to hire a dining servant went to one of the general hiring places of Richmond for that purpose. He found a boy who seemed to have all of the qualifications required and at a price which was satisfactory. The boy also seemed to like the appearance of the Judge, but, not being personally acquainted with him, asked that he be given a day's delay so that he could look into the character and standing of his prospective new master.

(23) Phillips, U. B. - American Negro Slavery, P. 408
(24) Richmond Daily Dispatch, Dec. 29, 1856
Chapter IV

Slave Labor

Prior to the time when Joseph Reid Anderson became affiliated with the Tredegar Iron works as commercial agent in 1841, the Tredegar works were run by white workmen except for a few Negro stevedores. These white workers were largely foreigners or American mechanics who had come down from the North. But this was a policy foreign to that of the older Virginia industrialists who, contrary to the views of some of the economic historians, had always used the Negro profitably in the iron industry.

In 1842 when the Tredegar directors called upon Joseph R. Anderson for suggestions regarding curtailments in the expenses of the business, he immediately presented a plan which proposed a reduction in the cost of labor. This plan called for trained slave helpers, supervised by white men. It further proposed that the trained white workers should be given a five-year contract as protection for them, and in addition to this, Anderson pointed out that according to the anticipated plan of operation, twenty-two Negroes could be used in the professional part of the business. He estimated to hire this number at the average rate of hire prevailing at that time would save the company $11,181 annually considering the operating cost under the present system. To own these Negro workers the annual operating
expenditure would be $12,281 less than under the system then in use. It was in view of the difference in these figures that Anderson advised the company to buy Negroes from time to time. The Tradegar board adopted the Anderson plan and it was put into operation as soon as practicable.

(1)

By 1845 Anderson had become the lessee of Tradegar works and was steadily expanding its operation. In October of that year the Tradegar books showed that the firm owned twenty-four slaves in addition to the number hired. (2)

After that year the Negro, whether hired or owned, continued to play an important part in the expansion of the operations of the leading iron works South of the Potomac.

The above plan of operation seemed to work well in the Tradegar works for a period of two years. In 1847 Anderson had his first experience with a strike. The white workers, from fear that the Negroes would in the course of time replace them in the mills if they continued to work with them and train them, went on a strike. Anderson, the shrewd master and business man that he was, did not for an instant allow the strike to change his mind or plan of action in regard to the employing of Negroes. Handling the situation in a way that enhanced his reputation as a leader

(1) Bruce, Kathleen- Virginia Iron Manufacture in the Slave Era, P. 234
(2) Ibid, P. 234
of no mean ability, the plant continued to operate and the strikers were summoned to court. The evidence in the case, however, pointed out that the strikers had not acted as an organized group or combination for the purpose of closing the iron works. In view of that fact the case was dismissed from court on the grounds that no law had been violated. (3)

The ability of the Negro to endure heat was a great factor in the hiring of Negro slaves for the iron works. Prior to the introduction of the Anderson plan, the Tredegar works had to curtail operations during the hot summer months as many of the white workers would refuse to work.

In 1848, $100 a year was considered the maximum hire for a Negro mechanic. There are no figures to show the actual saving to the Tredegar works through the use of hired and owned Negroes, however, it is estimated that this was a considerable amount between 1842-1853. (4) About 1853 the price of slave labor and of slaves began to increase considerably and Mr. Anderson had to pay more for slave hire. This increase in some cases amounted to from fifty to seventy five per cent.

Figures found in the Journals of the Tredegar Company show that the number of Negroes employed through hiring or purchasing continued to increase from year to year. (5)

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(3) Bruce, Kathleen - Virginia Iron Manufacture in the Slave Era, P. 235-236.
(4) Ibid, P. 244
(5) Ibid, P. 247
An advertisement given below appearing in the Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser under date of December 25, 1862 gives some idea of the number of Negroes which the Firm hired.

Five Hundred Negro hands wanted by the Tredegar Iron Works. Negroes to be supplied with very best provisions, which have already been secured, and good clothing provided for them at all seasons of the year.

J. R. Anderson and Co.

According to Anderson's statement of March 29, 1863, he was employing about seven hundred and fifty Negroes in all of the operations in his connection with the iron industry.

(6) From 1847, the year of the strike, on through the war he employed slave labor almost wholly with the exception of the white bosses.

The life of the colored workers during this period under discussion presents on the whole a rather sunny picture. This is perhaps a surprising fact to many who would believe that the Negroes in these manufacturing plants led a dull, dreary, and dreadful life. (7) In the Tredegar yards there was a bell which rang at 6:30 o'clock in the morning thus beginning the day. Ten hours with forty-five minutes for dinner at noon constituted the working day. The

(6) Bruce, Kathleen - Virginia Iron Manufacture in the Slave Era, P.P. 247 - 248
(7) Bruce, Kathleen - Slave Labor in the Virginia Iron Industry. P. 30
food consisted largely of boiled cabbage, turnips, hog meat, corn bread, and molasses and was prepared in great abundance by the women cooks in the quarters not far from the mills. After the official day was over the slaves practically became their own masters. Many of them being industrious would work over-time in order to make pocket money for themselves. Mr. Anderson always encouraged such practice and paid well for this over-time work. Some of the Negroes made from $10.00 to $15.00 per month in this manner and for the month of May 1860 sixty two Negroes were paid $217.12 for over-time work. (8) Not only were the Negroes given a chance to make extra money but the iron master made small gifts of money to the hands at Christmas. (9) They were provided with clothing appropriate to the season and the Tredegar Journals show that special provisions were often issued to the sick. (10) Many of the Negroes, thus having no real expense, spent the money earned by over-time work for frivolities and personal finery which they sported in the Negro parades on Sundays. Shoes were one of the chief articles of clothing purchased.

The discipline within the Tredegar works was rather stern but in spite of the tradition that the cat o' nine

(8) Bruce, Kathleen- Virginia Iron Manufacture in the Slave Era, P. 263
(9) Ibid - foot note, P. 253
(10) Ibid - P. 253
tails continually hung in a conspicuous place at the
Works there is evidence that it was very seldom used as
the books between 1843 – 1865 reveal but seven whippings.
(11) Perhaps the good discipline was due to the attention
on the part of the iron-master to the character of his
men and by his firm and courteous treatment of them.

One of the most striking cases of manumission in
Richmond (there were seventy six such acts from 1850-
1860 by which one hundred and thirty slaves became free
men) (12) about this time was of the slave Emmanuel
Quivers who had been hired by the Tredegar Iron Works.
This peculiar case is cited here because it reveals the
justice and kindness of the iron-master as well as the
integrity and mechanical ability of the Negro. (13) After
having been in the hire of Mr. Anderson for six months
Quivers went to him and requested that he (Anderson)
purchase him and then permit him to buy his freedom. This
Mr. Anderson finally did in January 1846 when the contract
for Quivers’ year’s hire terminated, the price paid being
$1,100. In the meantime the Negro had been given a position
of responsibility and trust with the understanding that
if he performed his duty well he would in the course of

(11) Bruce, Kathleen - Slave Labor in the Virginia Iron
Industry, P. 30
(12) Jackson, Luther P. Manumission in Certain Virginia
Cities, P. 304
(13) Bruce, Kathleen - Slave Labor in the Virginia Iron
Industry, P. P. 21-23
time be able to redeem himself. No doubt the master in-
tended this as a training school to equip the Negro for
his freedom. The Negro was charged a low rate of interest
which he was required to pay year by year, however, when
he had completed his redemption the iron-master refunded
to the Negro all of the interest which he had paid him.
Quivers was treated just as any white man of equal skill.
He was given Negro assistants and allowed to make extra
money by over-time work in addition to the regular pay
which he received. Mr. Anderson also lent Quivers the money
to buy the freedom of his wife and children, and while he
was working in the iron works to pay this back, his wife
was given the opportunity to add to the family income by
making shirts for the iron-master's hands. From January 1,
1847 until November 1, 1851 Anderson also furnished the
Quivers family with a house and fuel at the rate of $40.00
per year, and in addition to this aid, he gave the Negro
gifts of money from time to time. In 1850 Anderson made it
possible for Quivers to go to the free state of California.
There he faithfully performed the conditions laid down by
Anderson. A short time later he completed the redemption
of himself and family which he took with him to California
where they became citizens of unusually good standing.

In 1850 there were forty three tobacco factories
employing about 2,400 laborers. Many of these laborers
were Negro slaves hired by the year as was in the case of