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We have an eyewitness testimony, an actual victim of Robert E. Lee's cruelty.

Wesley Norris speaks to us from the grave.

"My name is Wesley Norris"

@WendyRogersAZ "My name is Wesley Norris; I was born a slave on the plantation of George Parke Custis; after the death of Mr. Custis, Gen. Lee, who had been made executor of the estate, assumed control of the slaves, in number about seventy; it was the general impression among the slaves of Mr.

@WendyRogersAZ ... Custis that on his death they should be forever free; in fact this statement had been made to them by Mr. C. years before; at his death we were informed by Gen. Lee that by the conditions of the will we must remain slaves for five years; I remained with Gen. Lee for about ...

@WendyRogersAZ .... seventeen months, when my sister Mary, a cousin of ours, and I determined to run away, which we did in the year 1859; we had already reached Westminster,

@WendyRogersAZ ... Westminster, in Maryland, on our way to the North, when we were apprehended and thrown into prison, and Gen. Lee notified of our arrest; we remained in prison fifteen days, when we were sent back to Arlington; we were immediately taken before Gen. Lee, who demanded the reason

@WendyRogersAZ ... why we ran away; we frankly told him that we considered ourselves free; he then told us he would teach us a lesson we never would forget; he then ordered us to the barn, where, in his presence, we were tied firmly to posts by a Mr. Gwin, our overseer, who was ordered by Gen.

@WendyRogersAZ ... Lee to strip us to the waist and give us fifty lashes each, excepting my sister, who received but twenty; we were accordingly stripped to the skin by the overseer, who, however, had sufficient humanity to decline whipping us; accordingly Dick Williams, a county constable,

@WendyRogersAZ ... was called in, who gave us the number of lashes ordered; Gen. Lee, in the meantime, stood by, and frequently enjoined Williams to “lay it on well,” an injunction which he did not fail to heed; not satisfied with simply lacerating

our naked flesh,

@WendyRogersAZ Gen. Lee then ordered the overseer to thoroughly wash our backs with brine, which was done. After this my cousin and myself were sent to Hanover Court-House jail, my sister being sent to Richmond to an agent to be hired; we remained in jail about a week, when we were sent to ...

@WendyRogersAZ Nelson county, where we were hired out by Gen. Lee's agent to work on the Orange and Alexander railroad; we remained thus employed for about seven months, and were then sent to Alabama, and put to work on what is known as the Northeastern railroad; in January, 1863, ...

@WendyRogersAZ ... we were sent to Richmond, from which place I finally made my escape through the rebel lines to freedom; I have nothing further to say; what I have stated is true in every particular, and I can at any time bring at least a dozen witnesses, both white and black, to ....

@WendyRogersAZ ... substantiate my statements: I am at present employed by the Government; and am at work in the National Cemetary on Arlington Heights, where I can be found by those who desire further particulars; ...

@WendyRogersAZ .... my sister referred to is at present employed by the French Minister at Washington, and will confirm my statement."

—Testimony of Wesley Norris (1866); reprinted in John W. Blassingame (ed.): Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, and Interviews.

@WendyRogersAZ I think I'll take Wesley's word over Wendy's.

@WendyRogersAZ https://t.co/FbG8iVdcR3?