

LOVE I AWETHU FURTHER

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Glossary

Page 1: “Julius Caesar”

Shakespeare’s play, *Julius Caesar*, follows a group of conspirators’ assassination of Caesar, who they perceive as a tyrant, and the impending civil war in ancient Rome. (For more information, please see Appendix A.)

Page 1: “Callie”

Callie’s counterpart in Shakespeare’s play, Cassius, is one of the conspirators against Caesar. Cassius instigates the conspiracy against Caesar. He is skilled in using language to persuade others, such as when he convinces Brutus to join the conspiracy. Resenting the god-like treatment of Caesar, Cassius opposes Caesar out of jealousy for his rise to power.

Page 1: “Beneatha”

Beneatha’s counterpart in Shakespeare’s play, Brutus, is one of the conspirators against Caesar. Brutus opposes Caesar out of his belief that Rome should not have a king. He is torn between his political ideals and his loyalty for his mentor figure and friend, as he decides whether or not to join the conspirators to assassinate Caesar.

Page 1: “Awethu” & “Amandla”

“Amandla” means “power” or “strength.” It is a political rallying-cry used by liberation groupings such as the African National Congress. “Amandla!” usually elicits the response “ngawet(h)u” or “awet(h)u”, meaning “is ours”. (*Dictionary of South African English*)

Page 1: “Portia”

Portia’s counterpart in Shakespeare’s play, Portia, is the wife of Brutus. She is logical and loyal to her husband, begging him to tell her what is troubling him as he debates whether or not to assassinate Caesar. She struggles with the gender expectations of Rome that associate femininity and womanhood with weakness. She proves her trustworthiness to Brutus by stabbing her own leg, and she proves her stoicism by gruesomely swallowing hot coals to kill herself.

Page numbers reflect those of the original rehearsal draft.

Page 1: “Cinna”

Cinna’s counterparts in Shakespeare’s play are Cinna, one of the conspirators against Caesar, and Cinna the poet. The plebeians of Rome, incensed by the funeral oration of Mark Antony, Caesar’s friend, turn on the conspirators, and the city dissolves into chaos and disorder. A group of Romans hear the name of Cinna the poet and assume that he is Cinna the conspirator, who they oppose. Cinna the poet protests that he is not the same Cinna, that he is the poet, not the conspirator, and the plebeians insist they should “[t]ear him for his bad verses”. Cinna the poet is dragged offstage by the crowd of plebeians to his death.

Page 1: “Mistress”

Mistress Catherine’s counterpart in Shakespeare’s play, Caesar, is a Roman general. At the beginning of the play, he has just beaten his enemy, Pompey, and his supporters wish to make him king. He is offered the crown three times, rejecting it each time. The conspirators oppose him on the grounds that he is too ambitious. After his assassination, he returns to haunt Brutus as a ghost during the civil war.

Page 1: “Antebellum”

“Antebellum” means “before the war”, used in reference to the American Civil War (1861-5). “During this period, federal and state governments grappled with the contradiction of U.S. slavery. States in the northern regions of the country gradually abolished the practice of slavery, even as they maintained strong economic ties to the practice elsewhere in the country. States in the southern regions, whose economies were entirely dependent on large-scale agricultural enterprises fueled by enslavement, made the system ever more restricting and degrading.” (*OED; New York Historical Society*)

Page 1: “Cabins”

Below are some reference images of cabins on plantations in the American south:

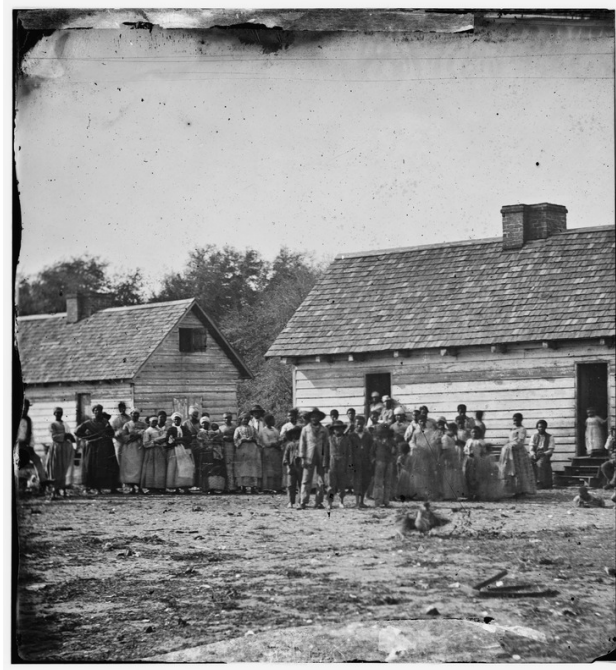


“Slave Cabin on a Rice Plantation, U.S. South, 1859”



“Slave Houses on a Rice Plantation, U.S. South, 1859”

Page numbers reflect those of the original rehearsal draft.



“Plantation Slaves, Beaufort, South Carolina, 1862”

Page 1: “fields”

Below are some reference images of plantation fields:



A field of tobacco grown on a plantation in Virginia.

Page numbers reflect those of the original rehearsal draft.



A field of tobacco crop in Charlotte County, Virginia.

Page 1: “Mistress’s house...the front of which is a large porch”

Antebellum architecture often featured wrap-around porches in front of houses.

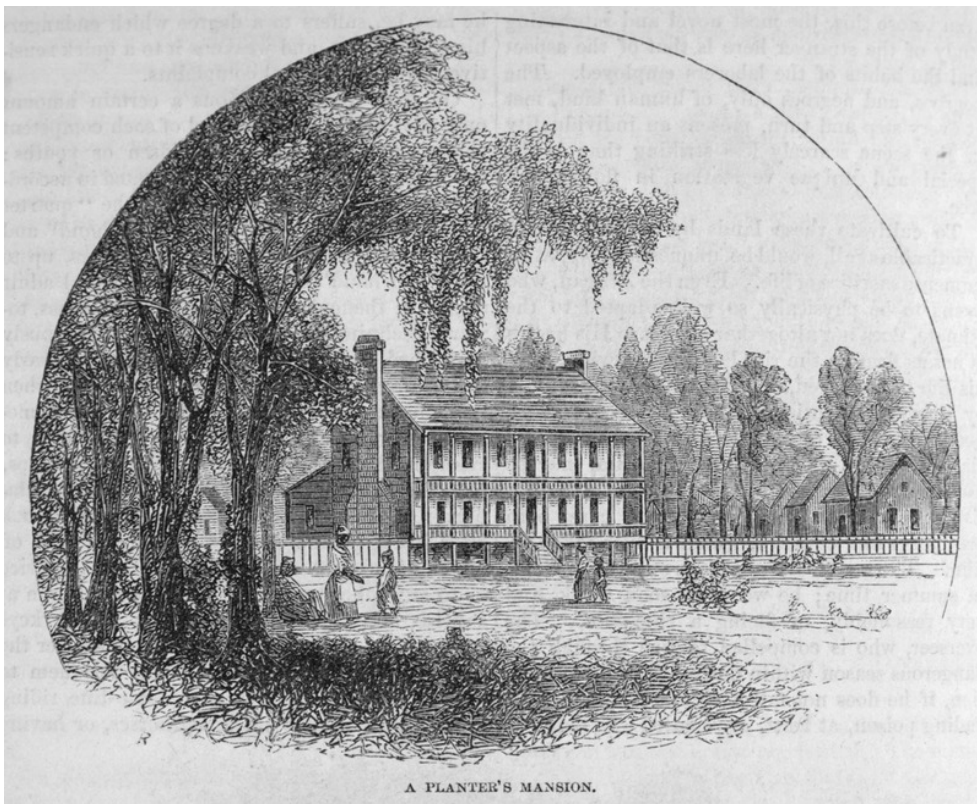


Shirley Plantation, located on the bank of the James River in Charles City County, Virginia.

Page numbers reflect those of the original rehearsal draft.



Barrington Hall, located in Roswell, Georgia.



"A Planter's Mansion"

Page numbers reflect those of the original rehearsal draft.

Page 8: “we went our separate ways / you to the house / me to the field”

Enslaved people working on plantations largely labored as either house servants or field hands. (For more information about the living conditions of both, please refer to Appendix C).

Page 9: “pig latin”

“Pig Latin” means: “incorrect or bad Latin; mock-Latin, spurious or parodying Latin.” It also means: “an invented or modified version of a language; specifically, a systematically altered form of English used as a sort of code, especially by children. In extended use: excessively convoluted language.” (*OED*)

Page 9: “boon”

A request or favor. (*OED*)

Page 12: “rye river overflowing”

The ever-presence of the “rye river” parallels the presence of the Tiber River in *Julius Caesar’s* Rome.

Page 12: “freedom papers”

“Freedom papers and certificates of freedom were documents declaring the free status of Blacks. These papers were important because ‘free people of color’ lived with the constant fear of being kidnapped and sold into slavery. Freedom papers proved the free status of a person and served as a legal affidavit. Manumissions and emancipations were legal documents that made official the act of setting a Black person free from slavery by a living or deceased slaveholder.” (*University of Pittsburgh*)

Page 12: “solar plexus”

A complex of nerves situated at the pit of the stomach. (*OED*)

Page 17: “they harvest tobacco”



“Cultivating Tobacco, Virginia, 1798”



“Tobacco Production, Richmond, Virginia, 1870s”

Page 19: “CINNA reads”

During the Antebellum period, the literacy rate among enslaved African Americans in Virginia increased from five percent to ten percent. “Elite whites worried that enslaved people who could read and write could travel through white society more easily and be exposed to ideas of freedom, making them more inclined to rebel. The gathering of enslaved people for the purpose of education was prohibited, so individuals stole away to learn on their own, often at great personal risk.” Laws

surrounding literacy became stricter after literary preacher Nat Turner’s Revolt in 1831.
(*encyclopediavirginia.org*)

Page 19: ‘*The Scarlett Letter*’

Nathaniel Hawthorne’s 1850 novel, *The Scarlet Letter*, is regarded as an American classic and as a moral study. In the novel, Hester Prynne bears a child out of wedlock and is forced to wear the scarlet letter, “A” on her dress as punishment for her adultery. Hester is eventually shown to be “a self-reliant heroine who is never truly repentant for committing adultery with the minister; she feels that their act was consecrated by their deep love for each other. Although she is initially scorned, over time her compassion and dignity silence many of her critics.” The novel reflects moral opposition, suggesting that “[t]he members of the community who are ostensibly the most respectable are often the most depraved, while the apparent sinners are often the most virtuous”. (*Encyclopedia Britannica*)

Page 19: ‘*David Walker’s Appeal*’

“David Walker’s *Appeal*, arguably the most radical of all anti-slavery documents, caused a great stir when it was published in September of 1829 with its call for slaves to revolt against their masters. David Walker, a free black originally from the South wrote, ‘. . .they want us for their slaves, and think nothing of murdering us. . . therefore, if there is an *attempt* made by us, kill or be killed. . . and believe this, that it is no more harm for you to kill a man who is trying to kill you, than it is for you to take a drink of water when thirsty.’ The goal of the *Appeal* was to instill pride in its black readers and give hope that change would someday come. It spoke out against colonization, a popular movement that sought to move free blacks to a colony in Africa. America, Walker believed, belonged to all who helped build it. He went even further, stating, ‘America is more our country than it is the whites -- we have enriched it with our *blood and tears*.’ He then asked, ‘will they drive us from our property and homes, which we have earned with our *blood*?’ Copies of the *Appeal* were discovered in Savannah, Georgia, within weeks of its publication. Within several months, copies were found from Virginia to Louisiana.” (*PBS*)

Page 27: “tenor”

“Tenor” means “way of proceeding”. (*OED*)

Page 30: “i dreamt / you went to swim / in rye river / and all the water / turned a bright and bloody red”

Antoinette tries to warn Mistress that she will experience bloodshed, echoing a scene in *Julius Caesar* in which Calpurnia warns her husband, Caesar, that if he goes to the Senate the morning of March 15, he will be the victim of violence. In Act 2, Scene 2 of *Julius Caesar*, Calpurnia tries to persuade Caesar

that he should not go to the Senate, for fear of his safety. When one of the conspirators, Deceius, comes to usher Caesar to the Senate, Caesar rejects the call, giving the reason that Calpurnia had a vision or dream in which Caesar was hurt and his enemies washed their hands in his blood:

Calphurnia here, my wife, stays me at home.
 She dreamt tonight she saw my statue,
 Which, like a fountain with an hundred spouts,
 Did run pure blood; and many lusty Romans
 Came smiling and did bathe their hands in it.
 And these does she apply for warnings and portents
 And evils imminent, and on her knee
 Hath begged that I will stay at home today. (*Shakespeare 2.2.80-87*)

Deceius mocks Calpurnia’s vision, convincing Caesar to not heed her warning. Caesar calls Calpurnia’s vision “foolish” and heads to the Senate. In Act 3, Scene 1, the conspirators do indeed stab Caesar, who spurts, like a “fountain”, blood which the conspirators wash their hands in. Calpurnia is proven to be an accurate foreteller of the future.

Page 46: “touissant”

Toussaint Louverture (1743-1803) was “leader of the Haitian independence movement during the French Revolution (1787–99). He emancipated the slaves and negotiated for the French colony on Hispaniola, Saint-Domingue (later Haiti), to be governed, briefly, by Black former slaves as a French protectorate.” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*)

Page 46: “nat”

Nat Turner (1800-1831) was an enslaved Black American who led “the only effective, sustained slave rebellion (August 1831) in U.S. history” in the state of Virginia. In 1831, he was sold to craftsman Joseph Travis. He planned to capture the armory at the county seat, Jerusalem, and then to press on with as many gathered recruits as possible to Dismal Swamp (30 miles east), where capture would be difficult. On August 21, he and seven fellow enslaved people murdered Travis and his family. A group of sixty followers set forth, killing sixty white people over the course of two days and nights. Local authorities captured most of the insurgents the following day; Turner eluded capture for sixty days, before he was captured, tried, and hanged. (*Encyclopedia Britannica; The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History*)

Page 46: “denmark”

“Denmark Vesey, a carpenter and formerly enslaved person, allegedly planned an enslaved insurrection to coincide with Bastille Day in Charleston, South Carolina in 1822. Vesey modeled his rebellion after the successful 1791 slave revolution in Haiti. His plans called for his followers to execute the white enslavers, liberate the city of Charleston, and then sail to Haiti before the white power structure could retaliate. Two of the slaves involved leaked details of the plot before it could be implemented. On receiving word of the plot, Charleston authorities mobilized quickly and arrested Vesey and his men. Out of 131 men arrested and charged with conspiracy, 67 were convicted and 35 were hanged, including Vesey.” (*National Park Services*)

Page 47: “asé”

“The power of the spirit, *ashé* (from the African language Yoruba)...is a vital creative force, uplifting individuals and communities. It can increase or decrease depending on the ritual practice and rigorous observance of religious duties and obligations. *Ashé* is contained in and transmitted by representative elements of vegetal, animal, and mineral offerings. *Ashé* is a power that is received, shared, and distributed through ritual practice. Symbolic concepts and elements are used as vehicles within the mystical and initiating experience.” (*Routledge Encyclopedia of Religious Rites, Rituals and Festivals*)

“*Asé* is given by Olodumare, [creator of existence], to everything—gods, ancestors, spirits, humans, animals, plants, rocks, rivers, and voiced words such as songs, prayers, praises, curses, or even everyday conversation. Existence, according to Yoruba thought, is dependent upon it; it is the power to make things happen and change. In addition to its sacred characteristics, *asé* also has important social ramifications, reflected in its translation as ‘power, authority, command.’ A person who, through training, experience, and initiation, learns how to use the essential life force of things is called *analaase*. Theoretically, every individual possesses a unique blend of performative power and knowledge—the potential for certain achievements. Yet, because no one can know with certainty the potential of others, *eso* (caution), *ifarabale* (composure), *owo* (respect), and *suuru* (patience) are highly valued in Yoruba society and shape all social interactions and organization.” (“*Yoruba: Nine Centuries of African Art and Thought*”)

Page 56: “north”

Northern states in the Antebellum period were more likely than southern states to have either laws abolishing slavery or a culture of abolition. Ninety-five percent of the country’s Black people lived in “slave states”, where Black people constituted a third of the population, in contrast to their one-percent of the population in the north. The economy of the northern states was still dependent on

the labor of enslaved people working in the south. (*James McPherson, “The Difference Between the Antebellum North and South”*)

Page 58: “philly”

Enslavement largely disappeared from the Philadelphia region by the 1830s, though the terms of gradual abolition meant it remained legal in Pennsylvania until 1847. “Over the next several decades, Philadelphia’s status as a port city and its border with slave-holding Maryland and Delaware attracted increasing numbers of fugitive slaves from the South.” (*philadelphiaencyclopedia.org*)

Page 58: “canada”

“A provision in the 1793 *Act to Limit Slavery* stated that any enslaved person who reached Upper Canada became free upon arrival. This encouraged a small number of enslaved African Americans in search of freedom to enter Canada, primarily without help. Word that freedom could be had in Canada spread further following the War of 1812. The enslaved servants of US military officers from the South brought back word that there were free ‘Black men in red coats’ in British North America. Arrivals of freedom-seekers in Upper Canada increased dramatically after 1850 with the passage of the *American Fugitive Slave Act*. It empowered slave catchers to pursue fugitives in Northern states.” (*The Canadian Encyclopedia*)

Page 58: “louis”

This refers to Louis Armstrong (1901-1971), an American trumpet player. (*Encyclopedia Britannica*)



Louis Armstrong, American trumpet player.

Page 60: “the dixon line”

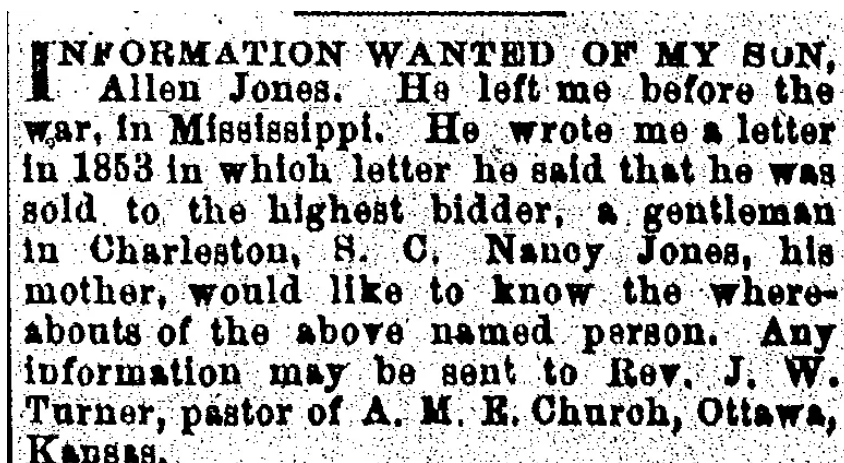
The Mason-Dixon line is a historical political boundary in the U.S. between Maryland and Pennsylvania. “In the pre-Civil War period it was regarded, together with the Ohio River, as the

dividing line between slave states south of it and free-soil states north of it.... Today the Mason-Dixon Line still serves figuratively as the political and social dividing line between the North and the South.” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*)

Page 63: “names / lost / every paper / got somebody looking for somebody”

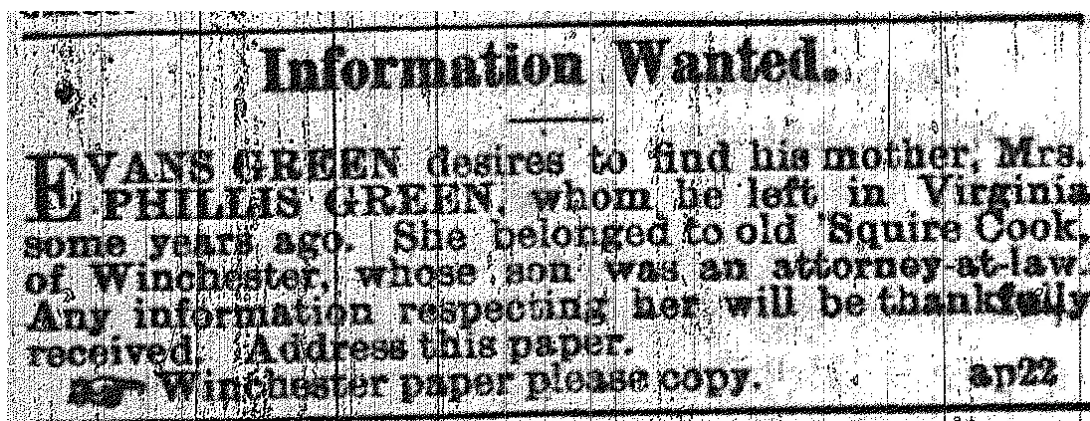
“Formerly enslaved people placed these ads hoping to reconnect with family and loved ones for decades following emancipation. The ads serve as testaments to their enduring hope and determination to regain what was taken from them.” (*Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery, informationwanted.org*)

Here are some examples of these ads:



INFORMATION WANTED OF MY SON,
Allen Jones. He left me before the war, in Mississippi. He wrote me a letter in 1853 in which letter he said that he was sold to the highest bidder, a gentleman in Charleston, S. C. Nancy Jones, his mother, would like to know the whereabouts of the above named person. Any information may be sent to Rev. J. W. Turner, pastor of A. M. E. Church, Ottawa, Kansas.

“In 1886, Nancy Jones placed an ad seeking her son, Allen, in an ad in *The Christian Recorder* of Philadelphia.”



Information Wanted.
EVANS GREEN desires to find his mother, Mrs. **PHILLIS GREEN**, whom he left in Virginia some years ago. She belonged to old Squire Cook, of Winchester, whose son was an attorney-at-law. Any information respecting her will be thankfully received. Address this paper.
 Winchester paper please copy. ap22

“Evans Green searches for his mother, Phillis, through an ad placed in *The Black Republican* of New Orleans in 1865.”

INFORMATION WANTED.

My father, Phil Givens, left Owensboro, Ky., ten years ago for Missouri; also my sister, Biddy Givens. It is said that she lived in Jackson, Mo. Any information about them will be gladly received by writing to me at Owensboro, Ky.

JANE GIVENS,

“Jane Givens searches for her father, Phil, and sister, Biddy, through an ad placed in Cincinnati’s *The Colored Citizen* in 1866.”

Page 63: “booker t”

Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) was an educator, a reformer, the first Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute (now Tuskegee University), and an influential leader of Black Americans between 1895 and 1915. Born into enslavement, Washington was emancipated, sought education, and eventually became an educator. He asserted that Black Americans could best gain equality in the U.S. by “improving their economic situation through education rather than by demanding equal rights”; this conviction was termed “the Atlantic Compromise.” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*)

Page 66: “genteel”

“Genteel” means: “having the manners or lifestyle associated with people of high social position or of a superior social class.” (*OED*)

Page 68: “sold / down the river”

Enslaved persons would be “sold down the [Mississippi or Ohio] river[s]” for much of the first half of the 19th century from Louisville, Kentucky, one of the largest marketplaces of enslaved people in the country. They would be transported to the cotton plantation in states further south. The phrase, “sold down the river” has signified a profound betrayal for generations; this threat of being “sold down the river” was “tantamount to a death sentence”. “Because white planters valued men over women as laborers, male slaves were far more likely to be ‘sold down the river.’ In addition to the tragedy of being separated from family, to be sent down the river meant a sentence of brutally hard labor. As the global

demand for cotton grew, the demand for more and more slave labor grew at an equally large pace.”
(*Lakshmi Gandhi, NPR*)

Page 83: “if we speak of freedom / they come with ropes”

“A *lynching* is the public killing of an individual who has not received any due process. These executions were often carried out by lawless mobs, though police officers did participate, under the pretext of justice. Lynchings were violent public acts that white people used to terrorize and control Black people in the 19th and 20th centuries, particularly in the South. Lynchings typically evoke images of Black men and women hanging from trees, but they involved other extreme brutality, such as torture, mutilation, decapitation, and desecration. Some victims were burned alive. A typical lynching involved a criminal accusation, an arrest, and the assembly of a mob, followed by seizure, physical torment, and murder of the victim. Lynchings were often public spectacles attended by the white community in celebration of white supremacy.” The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) cites the 2020 fatal shooting of Ahmaud Arbery and the 2020 death of George Floyd as modern-day lynchings. (*NAACP*)

Page 86: “north star”

Seeking freedom in the American north, enslaved Americans used the North Star as a beacon to find their way. Located in relation to the Big Dipper and the Little Dipper, two recognizable constellations in the night sky, the North Star guided people seeking their way north. Celestial wayfinding knowledge was passed from generation to generation; enslaved people who did not know how to read or write could “read” the night sky, observing the stars and their patterns, to find “important cues for survival”. “The Big Dipper and North Star were referenced in many slave narratives and songs.” (*National Park Service*)

APPENDIX A: Introduction to *Julius Caesar*

A historical tragedy by William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar* would have been one of the first plays to be performed at the Globe Theatre on the south bank of the Thames River in London in 1599.

Shakespeare's primary source for *Julius Caesar* was Thomas North's 1579 translation of Greek philosopher Plutarch's *Lives of Noble Grecians and Romans* (Andrew Dickson and Joe Staines, *The Globe Guide to Shakespeare: The Plays, the Productions, the Life*).

“When *Julius Caesar* was being written, there was, in England and associated with Caesar, a sharp political awareness that it was possible to challenge rigidity of rule: a rigidity probably extending to tyranny; a challenge possibly extending to conspiracy leading to rebellion” (David Daniell, introduction to Arden ed. of *Julius Caesar*). Queen Elizabeth I might have invited comparison between herself and a tyrannical Caesar through her policies in the years leading up to her death (Daniell). These comparisons between ancient Rome and Elizabethan England could be seen through the “dreaded political [consequence of] civil war” (Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare After All*). Elizabethan Londoners likely felt that ancient Rome was entwined with London, both in a geographical sense, in that many of the structures located in London originated in the time of Roman invasion, and culturally, in that the stories of Caesar formed part of their own history (S. P. Cerasano, introduction to Norton ed. of *Julius Caesar*).

Productions of *Julius Caesar* have sought to set the play in various historical and contemporary contexts that speak to political power and tyranny. *Caesar* was first performed in a young America of the Revolution in 1770; the production called Brutus a “patriot”. In the 20th century, productions have cast Caesar and Rome with the aesthetics of Mussolini, the Nazis, Fidel Castro, and Latin American fascism. In the 21st century, productions have costumed Caesar after Obama and Trump, respectively (Peter Marks, *The Washington Post*).

Criticism about the play has dealt with the ambiguity of who is the protagonist (the titular Caesar or conspirators/anti-heros Brutus and Cassius) and with the ambiguity of whether or not Shakespeare's Caesar is in fact tyrannical (and, subsequently, with the question of whether or not his murder was justified).

APPENDIX B: Family separation in enslavement

An excerpt from Heather Andrea Williams’s “How Slavery Affected African American Families”, published with the National Humanities Center:

Enslaved people lived with the perpetual possibility of separation through the sale of one or more family members. Slaveowners’ wealth lay largely in the people they owned, therefore, they frequently sold and or purchased people as finances warranted. A multitude of scenarios brought about sale. An enslaved person could be sold as part of an estate when his owner died, or because the owner needed to liquidate assets to pay off debts, or because the owner thought the enslaved person was a troublemaker. A father might be sold away by his owner while the mother and children remained behind, or the mother and children might be sold. Enslaved families were also divided for inheritance when an owner died, or because the owners’ adult children moved away to create new lives, taking some of the enslaved people with them. These decisions were, of course, beyond the control of the people whose lives they affected most. Sometimes an enslaved man or woman pleaded with an owner to purchase his or her spouse to avoid separation. The intervention was not always successful. Historian Michael Tadman has estimated that approximately one third of enslaved children in the upper South states of Maryland and Virginia experienced family separation in one of three possible scenarios: sale away from parents; sale with mother away from father; or sale of mother or father away from child. The fear of separation haunted adults who knew how likely it was to happen. Young children, innocently unaware of the possibilities, learned quickly of the pain that such separations could cost.

APPENDIX C: Living conditions in enslavement

An excerpt from Nicholas Boston's "The Slave Experience: Living Conditions", part of PBS's 2004 production, *Slavery and the Making of America*:

In the rural context, living conditions for enslaved people were determined in large part by the size and nature of the agricultural unit on which they lived. Contrary to the overwhelming image of the grand Southern plantation worked by hundreds of slaves, most agricultural units in the South up until about two decades before the Civil War were small farms with 20 to 30 slaves each.

The conditions of slaves under these circumstances were most easily grouped into the experiences of field slaves and house slaves. The vast majority of plantation slaves labored in the fields, while a select few worked at domestic and vocational duties in and around the owners' houses. Each situation brought its own set of demands, hazards, and perks regarding not only labor, but also quality of food, clothing, and shelter received.

Weekly food rations -- usually corn meal, lard, some meat, molasses, peas, greens, and flour -- were distributed every Saturday. Vegetable patches or gardens, if permitted by the owner, supplied fresh produce to add to the rations. Morning meals were prepared and consumed at daybreak in the slaves' cabins. The day's other meals were usually prepared in a central cookhouse by an elderly man or woman no longer capable of strenuous labor in the field. Recalled a former enslaved man: "The peas, the beans, the turnips, the potatoes, all seasoned up with meats and sometimes a ham bone, was cooked in a big iron kettle and when meal time come they all gathered around the pot for a-plenty of helpings!" This took place at noon, or whenever the field slaves were given a break from work. At the day's end, some semblance of family dinner would be prepared by a wife or mother in individual cabins. The diets, high in fat and starch, were not nutritionally sound and could lead to ailments, including scurvy and rickets. Enslaved people in all regions and time periods often did not have enough to eat; some resorted to stealing food from the master. House slaves could slip food from leftovers in the kitchen, but had to be very careful not to get caught, for harsh punishments awaited such an offense.

Clothing, distributed by the master, usually once a year and often at Christmastime, was apportioned according sex and age as well as to the labor performed by its wearer. Children, for instance, often went unclothed entirely until they reached adolescence.

Elderly slaves who could not do physical labor were not given the shoes or extra layers of clothing during the winter that younger fieldworkers were. Whereas many field workers were not given sufficient clothing to cover their bodies, house slaves tended to be dressed with more modesty, sometimes in the hand-me-downs of masters and mistresses. Most slaves lived in similar dwellings, simple cabins

furnished sparsely. A few were given rooms in the main house. The relationships of slaves with one another, with their masters, with overseers and free persons, were all to a certain extent shaped by the unique circumstances of life experienced by each slave. House slaves, for example, sometimes came to identify with their masters' interests over those of fellow slaves. Female house slaves, in particular, often formed very close attachments to their mistresses. Though such relationships did not always impact the slave's relationship with other slaves in any significant way, they could lead the slave to act as an informant reporting on the activities of her fellow enslaved. On the other hand, girls who waited upon tables could serve the slave community as rich sources of information, gossip, and warnings.

Different circumstances surrounded fieldwork. Laboring together in task groups, enslaved blacks might develop a sense of united welfare. Yet, they might also be supervised by a black driver or overseer responsible for representing the master's interests, a position which could prove divisive within the slave community particularly because the driver would be obliged to mete out punishments on other blacks.

The lives of enslaved men and women were shaped by a confluence of material circumstances, geographic location, and the financial status and ideological stance of a given slaveholder. The experience of slavery was never a comfortable one. Nevertheless, the kind of labor assigned, the quantity and quality of food and clothing received, the type of shelter provided, and the form of punishments dealt could lessen or increase the level of discomfort slaves had to endure. These living conditions not only impacted the physical and psychological state of the slave, but also had effects on the relationships that African Americans built with each other and with whites in the age of slavery.