



John; but it was not master John Quincy Adams. I think, now-a-days, we only acknowledge our Heavenly Master, who is our father and mother too, and will protect us from such outrage and cruelty as we were subject to. I have seen droves of men, women and children, all handcuffed together, going to Richmond, Virginia, to be sold again, and to hear their cries and groans would make every tender-hearted man or woman shed tears, but their masters' hearts were so hard they never cried only when they did not get the price they asked for what they called their property, and then take the money and dress off of it. What style

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they put on off of the poor slave. ...

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Before the war those gentlemen and ladies would come North in style. Why do they not come now? No negroes to sell. When they were getting ready to come North some poor

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mother or father, sister or brother, would be sold to get money to take pleasure with. But how is it now? Negroes are not worth one penny. But I think I am worth more than a penny. I think I am worth more than a penny to the good and kind gentleman who hires me now. It is a nice thing to be free. Indeed you would think so if you had been a slave.

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Look at the fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, that are still coming and finding their children that were sold for years. Not long ago a husband found his dear wife that had been sold for many years. I only trust in God that I may find my dear sister that was sold before the war.

I must now tell you what a very sad and heart-broken boy I was before the war. In 1857 my twin brother to me, Aaron A. Adams, and my sister, Sallie Ann Adams, were sold from us at Winchester, Va. I will just say that any human reason can imagine how I felt to leave a dear brother and sister, but more particularly the twin to myself, who was taken and sold far away in the South. I thought, though but a boy, if I could just die to get rid of my sorrow and distress, I would be satisfied. I could do no good, but suffered day and night for months and years. Two or three years after I heard from my dear brother. He had been sold

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seven times, and was bought every time for a house servant. The last time he was sold a gentleman bought him in Memphis, Tenn. There he lived for some time, and when he got a chance he wrote to us. When the first letter came I was away from home six or eight miles. My dear father and mother sent me word that they had received a letter from Aaron. Well, my dear friends, you may know how I felt. I cried, I prayed, I done everything I could. I felt as if I could run that eight miles without stopping to rest. I waited until Sunday morning, and then started for home. When near home I felt very weak, the reason was I thought it might be a mistake. When I got home my mother said, "my son, here is a letter from poor Aaron." What a rejoicing time we had that Sunday. My father and oldest brother could read print, but not writing. I got a friend to read it for me, and to write one to him. I received a letter from him soon afterwards and his picture. For a long time I did not hear

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from him, but believe that some of the white folks got our letters and kept them, for my brother told me since that he often wrote me. It was eight years from that time till I heard from him again. In the fall of 1867, Mr. Charles Mann, the proprietor's son of the Jones House, Harrisburg, Pa., to my surprise said, "John Q., have you a brother in Memphis, Tenn." I said, "yes, sir, some years ago." He said, "I saw him there a month ago, and I thought it was you, and said, "John Q., what are you doing here?" He said, "my name is not John, but I had a brother named John Q. Adams, at Winchester, Va. I was sold 12 or 13 years ago." Mr. Mann said he could hardly believe him. My brother declared his name was Aaron A. Adams. Mr. Mann said, "there was a young man living with my father in Harrisburg named J. Q. Adams. It must be your brother." When Mr. Mann came home he told me all about it. I could write my own letters then. I wrote to my brother.

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I received a letter from him containing his picture. You could not tell it from mine.

On the 28th of July, 1868, he came to this city to see me. Every one that saw him thought it was me. To show you how much he looked like me I will relate an incident that occurred when he was here. I went to a store and bought some articles, and there was some money coming to me. He was going down street and when passing the store the storekeeper called him in and said, "Adams here is your change." Aaron took it and brought it home and gave it to me. I thank God to-day that we can write to each other, and visit each other when we wish to.

But still I sorrow yet. My dear sister, Sallie Ann Adams, who was sold with brother Aaron, has not been heard from yet, but we still hope that God will bless us with that opportunity to meet her on earth. If not, this is our hope in the last days.

*[Adams recounts how his family self-emancipated during the Civil War.]*

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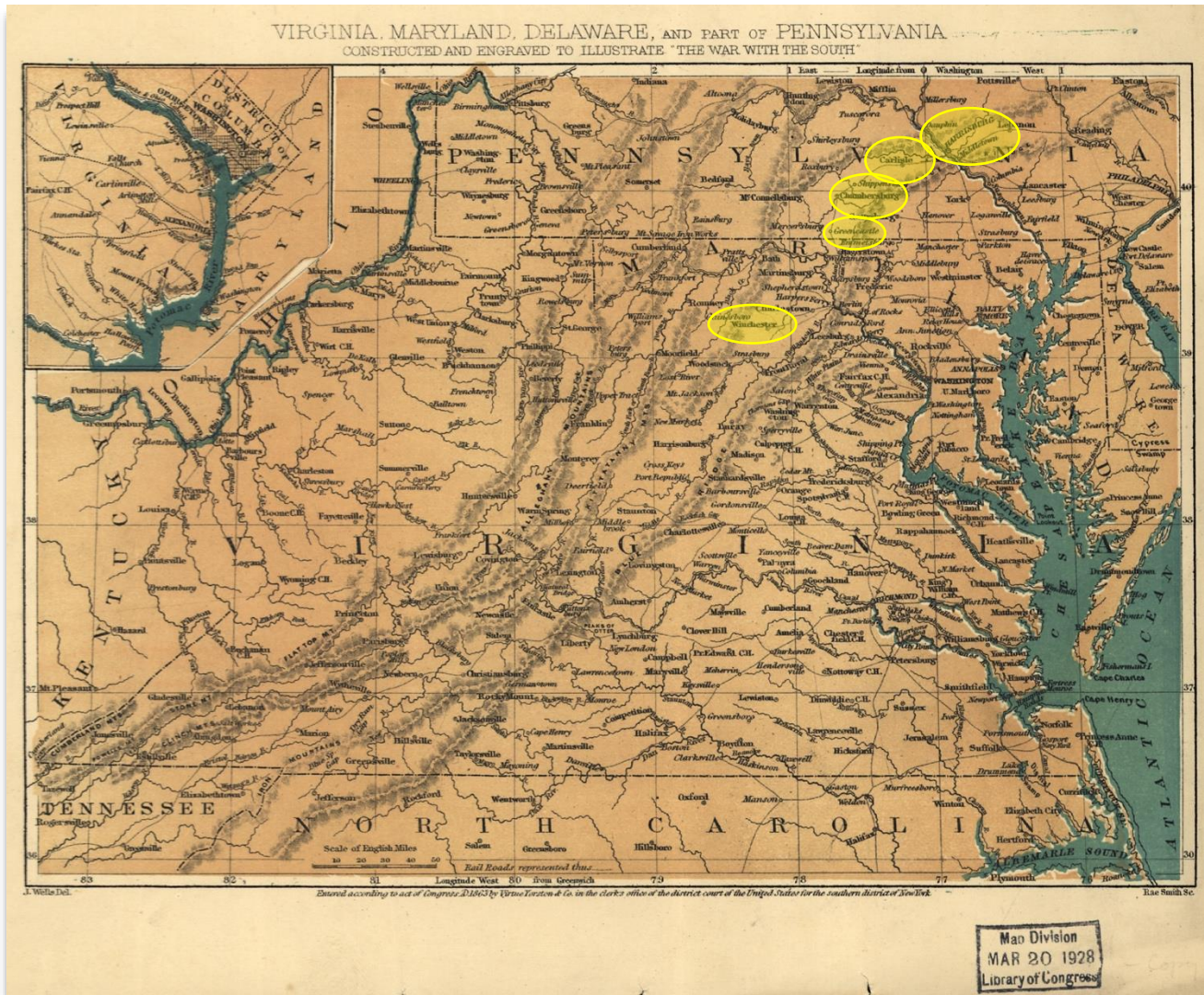
On Saturday, June 27, 1862, we left old mistress, and young miss, and every other kind of miss. The Rebels getting

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too hot in old Winchester, we made for the old Keystone State, came to Greencastle, remained there a few weeks, left for Chambersburg, next for Carlisle, and then to Harrisburg. Father and mother, four brothers and two sisters came. I am told that when old mistress got up in the morning, found all the negroes gone, they thought that the devil had got into them negroes last night. Every one is gone, and where are they gone to? I suppose they have gone with them devilish Yankees. But here is what they said, if we would come back they would set us all free. I had heard that too often, so I did not listen to that kind of talk. I thought that they had had their time, and this was my time. So off we went, and if it had not been for Gen. Geary we would all have been taken down South, and never would have saw each other again. His army was there, and the orders were that no one could leave Winchester. My [f]ather went to the General and told him all bout it, and he was so kind as to give us

a pass through to Pennsylvania. Two days after that the Rebels came for us, but we were all gone. Ah! how we did thank Gen. Geary for that philanthropic act; and whenever I see the Governor or any of his family I think of it, and pray that God will bless him for that kind act to us in time of our need. I did not know that it was Gen. Geary until we came here. Father told me it was. What might have been the result no one knows but God himself.



Adams recounts his family's path to freedom from Winchester, VA to Greencastle, PA, then to Chambersburg, Carlisle, and finally Harrisburg. Map, *Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and part of Pennsylvania*, 1863, Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division. <https://lccn.loc.gov/99447140>