

Primary Source: Charges of Abuse ^[1]

Many former enslavers did not accept emancipation, and they tried to continue to treat Black Americans the same way they had before the Civil War. This included but was not limited to harassment and physical and emotional threats and harm. The Freedmen's Bureau tried to help Black Americans facing abuse, presenting their cases to the occupation army.

The Freedmen's Bureau kept a record of the complaints brought by African Americans against whites. See, for example, this [Freedmen's Bureau Report of Outrages in North Carolina, June 1866 - January 1867](#)^[2].

Case of Mr. Wm Barnes of Wilson Co N.C. Charged with gross abuse to an aged woman of color.

Chanie "the abused" states as follows --

- I. That Mrs. Sally Barnes "wife of the accused" beat her with her hand --
- II. That not satisfied with this the said Mrs. Barnes beat her with a shingle. -- that she "Chanie" caught hold of the shingle. when Mr. Barnes appeared and said--"Turn that shingle loose. you g--d. d-- old b--h. or I'll knock you in head with this walking stick-- whereupon she "Chanie" let go of the shingle and suffered Mrs. Barnes to continue beating her.
- III. That while Mr. Barnes and family were at breakfast she started for the town of Wilson, Watson Co. to report the case to Capt. Bullock of the Local Police for said Co.
- IV. That she was turned back by some person unknown to her who claimed to be a Yankee
- V. That soon after return home Mr. Barnes appeared and said-- Oh yes you have come back G--d A--y G--d d-- old b --h You went off to report me G--d A--y d-- you-- I'll report you after I get my dinner G--d A--y d-- you-- I'll report your back
- VI. That after his dinner he appeared and said Now go out in the road G--d, d-- you and strip your coat and shirt right off-- I'll give you h--ll before I have done with you
- VII. That he beat her terribly after which he told her to go on now and spin your task of cotton or I'll give you as much more in the morning
- VIII. That she worked around until sunday "This being upon Tuesday Aug 1" watching for an opportunity to escape, when she left for Goldsboro.

Mary Ann daughter of Chanie -- states as follows

- I. That she "Mary Ann" told her mistress "Mrs. Wm Barnes that she would not stay there and work if she "Mrs. Barnes" kept her clothes locked up--whereupon Mrs. Barnes attempted to whip her. that she guarded her blows when Mrs Barnes called Mr-- Barnes-- who with his grown son James, came in and between the three gave her a hundred or more blows--
- II. That they tied her hands and told her to get down-- That she resisted when Mr. Barnes says, that won't do. Bring her out doors Let's tie her between two trees
- III. That they tied her feet to one tree and her hands to another, then cut her hair off.
- IV. That they allowed the dogs "three in number" to tear her clothes off and bite her. that James took off such clothing as the dogs left
- V. That Mr Barnes gave her two hundred lashes with a Paddle "A strap made purposely for whipping negroes" And said no d--d nigger should be free under him &c. &c.

Source Citation:

Testimony of Chanie and of Mary Ann, case William Barnes, [Aug. 1865?], Goldsboro NC Subassistant Commissioner. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, Abandoned Lands, Record Group 105, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

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