INTERNATIONAL
STORYTELLING CENTER

What You Don't Know (But Should) About Appalachian Slavery

(Please note: This transcript was created from closed captions and as such may have errors in spelling, grammar, and mechanics.)

[MUSIC]

>> ALICESTYNE: Good afternoon. I'm Alicestyne Turley, director of the International Storytelling Center Freedom Stories project. An international storytelling initiative that illuminates ignored aspects of Appalachian African American history and brings together the folk art of storytelling and the humanities scholarship with the intend to guide the public through a deeper appreciation of the role in African American stories in the American lexicon. The project is designed to trace the history of African Americans in Appalachia over time showing how the past is shaped and inform the world we know today. While conceived as a regional program based in central Appalachia, the project's multimedia tool kit and presentations serve as a resource for the nation and the world.

We are here to high height the diversity of our Appalachian communities, the complexities of Appalachian histories and the role the region has played in U.S. history. All of which has been subject to misunderstanding and stereotypes.

This International Storytelling Center program is fortunate to be able to conduct this important work and present these public discussions through the general support of the national endowment of the humanities which is the major support jeerer. The discuss is being recorded and -- supporter. The discussion is being recorded and will be available on the Facebook websites and become a permanent part of the Freedom Stories tool kit for public use and reference in the future. I would encourage the viewing audience if you have questions for the panelists during the discussion text your questions and comments to our Facebook page and we will try our best to get to as many as we can and time permits.

If you wish to follow remaining Freedom Stories discussions planned for the future, you can find the latest information on the International Storytelling Center website page which will have most updated details.

We are beginning today's discussion with the benefit of hearing poetry from note the author and poet Frank X Walker. Who will be sharing his poetry with our viewing audience and on the other side we will begin the discussion with today's panelist a Professor at the University of Kentucky.

And also known throughout the country as the creator of the word Affrilachian and cofounder of Affrilachian poets. Professor Walker has accepted the responsibility of challenging the notion of the homogeneous all white. And focusing on social family, identity and place the collections include when winter come, the ascension of or, buffalo dance. Black Box and turn me loose the unghosting of Medgar Evers. Here is our featured poet and professor, Frank X. Walker.

>> FRANK: Thank you, Dr. Turley. I'm honored to be here to share work on these two collections. About the Lewis and Clark expedition. The first set of poems are in "the voice of York" and considered persona poems, part of a new genre that that we consider historical poetry in the same way that you appreciate historical fiction. And because these are person A poems what you will hear will hopefully not be my voice but the voice of York who participate as a full member in the expedition even though he didn't get the full reward when it was all over.

Imagine it is early 1800s and they have been traveling for a year and a half and finally reached the Pacific Ocean and he is standing there looking out at this amazing image he had never seen before and he is wishing he could talk about it when he gets home to his family especially his wife. But he is the only man in the group who can't read and write.

And so he has to remember everything with such detailed intensity it requires him to almost take pictures with his mind. Imagine that mind set and appreciate the voice I will open with the first poem and read straight through about nine poems so you get a feel for what the language and the time and the experience was like for York and his wife and stepmother.

Wind talker. York. If I could make my words dress they naked selves in blackberry juice, lay down a piece of bark, sheep onion skin like massa do, if I could send a letter home to my wife, put it in the wind on wings or water I would tell her about the talker and all of the wide and high places this side of the big river, how his family numbering three for every star in the sky look like a force when they graze together and turning to the muddy Missouri, making the grass lay down long after the quiet has returned. How they don't raise a tail when I come around with my Wooly head and tobacco skin like I'm one of them. Making them thing me big medicine, Katawka who walk like man. Today we stood on the edge of all of this and looked out at so much water the mountains we crossed here to get here seem a little smaller. As I watch fish splash back in the water like children playing I will think about her and if gonna ever been free and then I close my eyes and pray that I don't live long enough to see master make this ugly, too.

One of the big issues with York and his condition was his literacy or lack of literacy. And he first hinted that with the poem called primer.

The only book we allowed to know is the bible. Though many a slave been sold south had fingers chopped off and worse for the crime of readin' and writtein'. I figures my respect for a good telling comes from listening to old York weave his magic at night. Folk come to my porch like baby possums and lived off the bread he give to every story no matter how many times they tasted the tale. I learned to appreciate the power of single words hold the lamp over master while he studies his own letters and studies their own returns. They think all slaves dumb because we can't cipher but they would be surprised how many words we pick up just standing around like trees in a room of educated men.

One of the biggest challenges was York's relationship with his wife and marriage in general considering they were property or considered property and less than human by a lot of the owners. This was Sundays in Christmas when they had a chance to visit each other and York's wife was owned by a different family in Kentucky.

I cares plenty for my wife but I done told her slave can't truly know love being as master and white men minutes in general have and takes certain privileges with our women. I suspect the deepest hurt in the world, standing on the front porch while the master part her thighs knowing that any cry raised is invite death or worse. But what else but love make you hold that woman even tighter try to rock her back to whole long after the tears dry up and the hurt turns to ashes back to flames. It be a night time and deep into winter I could think of no other breath I wish to feel and no other whisper I ache to hear. What we' allowed to feel might not rate as love but powerful enough to make you rue the time between visits.

I will finish with the second book from the series of. In the first book York's voice tells you the is entire story. The entire story is retold again in the voices of women who participated in the ex-pa diction in these imagined ways. And the first that bridges the gap you heard primer one about literacy. This is primer two which speaks to literacy in a broader way andish strokes the enslaved man's relationship with nature versus how he felt his master related to primer two. York speaking.

I can read the heart of a woman in her eyes as easy as a lie in man's face. The direction and power of storm speaks clearly to me from low flying bird wings. I can dip my fingers into a muddy hoof or toe print and tell how many of what I'm going to have for dinner. The thickness of tree bark, walnut holes and tobacco worms tell me how ugly going to be. I knows the seasons like a book. I can read moss, Clouds, sunsets, the moon and the mares folding time with the touch. But I would trade all this to know how to scratch out my name and more than an X. To have my stories leap off paper as easy as they roll off my tongue. To listen to my own eyes make the words on parchment say this here man called York. Work for himself, learn his books, live and die free.

Will I'm going to add a different voice now. This is the imagined voice of his stepmother Rose who was married to York's father old York and she is critical of York and his position as a man servant which means he is not a field servant which meant he dressed better and ate better and traveled with William Clark. Usually had a pair of good shoes and learned a lot of things. A lot of people don't know he carried a knife and a hatchet and gun which is unusual for an enslaved person. Rose shows her thorns. York act like his axe got two heads on it and that one he make lightning strike but his thunder ain't no more dinner hand clap. I bites my tongue out of respect for his daddy because he part of the blame for egging his foolishness on all these years but I lost my taste for him listen to him all night on the porch bragging to the mens about sleeping with long haired Indian women and how much prettier they was and they don't talk back and treat him and what not. Like that wife I have his ain't washed his dirty feet. If he was my son, a big tree fall just the same as a little one only harder. Because just he ain't around in the field and follow master around like a pet dog and eat the scraps off the plate he think he better than the rest of us. He could hardly get his head in the door when he left and now back here calling lies and claiming to be a hero for wiping a white man's ass all the way to the ocean and back. She was not a fan.

This is the voice of York's enslaved wife and research does not reveal her actual name even after all these years. This is called say my name.

Folks round here want to call me auntie. York's old wife or master so and so nigger wench like I ain't got a name of my own. Them don't know how hard it be to put aside a piece of myself that nobody can't never touch but me. A piece big enough to wrestle the long hard days and keep yourself warm at night without a man round. Nobody like to stand in the dark night after night rafting that buffalo rope he sent and look up the stars and wonder which ones is looking down on him and believe if he was out there and something bad happened that I would feel it, too.

When he come home, I don't need him to say he loved me. I don't need him to bring me gifts. I just want him to hold me close and make like he glad to see me. Bend down to my ear and whisper my name. Ever.

One of the things the research reveals from the Ness Pearce transcribes personal stories they talk about York romancing and marrying one of the chief's daughters, chief red grisly who was Ness Pearce and I imagine that when York came home to Kentucky and looked his wife in the eye that as soon as she looked at him really close she knew immediately he had been unfaithful. This is called unwelcome guest. This is York's enslaved wife.

I don't think York knowed I could see her, too. The first time was in the corner of his eye while he looked far off but stare at the plate in front of him. He didn't say nothing but her but the way his lips turned up at the end was said plenty. His ground helped to me to know a slave woman's place. I sit is up with my hands and ears open waiting to catch her name on his lips. After that, no matter how much he talk of grizzlies and buffalos and big fish mountains and oceans she become all I can see and all I wants to know. It gets so crowded in our little place I swears I can almost smell her and by then I knows one of us will have to go. She can't really take him to divorce court, but she is not without means so I imagine her using some folk medicine and this particular cure called the sunflower seed oil. York's enslaved wife. First I get fresh well water and puts it on the bowl and stirs up a tea brew apricot vine and rattle make weed and money and with a wooden tooth comb I commences to scratching at the scalp until it showed it was covered with snow and then fills my wash tub with boiling water doctored with peppermint roots and scrubbing him slow enough for the heat to open his doors. He his body is clean I start back on his head and using my fingers up and down his scalp until he lets loose a low moan. After I rinses and twists the force out I starts back in with warm sun flower seed oil only this time every finger makes its own little circle and both hands make bigger ones and follow to the stiff tree limbs in the back of his neck across his crown to his soft spot where my thumb is dig in deep slow when the headaches on on. I rub his neck and shoulders down to his ribs and arms and then like a turtle dances I moves back up again.

I work slow and hard and after awhile when I gets all the way to his man sack, he opens his eyes and be glad it's me. Don't try that at home. I want to close with two final poems. One in York's voice and one in his enslaved wife's voice. And they borrow language from the traditional marriage ceremony. And they speak to the challenge of trying to maintain a whole relationship under the psychological pressure and devastation that had to exist that would allow another man to come into our house and take your wife essentially rape your wife while you stand on the porch and say nothing at the threat of death.

This is called to have and to hold. This is York.

It do more harm than good to be enslaved and agree to love forever when there be folks over us with even more power than death to do us part. being another man's property alls I can promise is when we are in the same quarters no one will hold you closer or with more tenderness than me. If ever I have to choose between another day of service and death, I will always choose living even if master send me down MISSIPPI tomorrow. I aim to see you every Sunday and Christmas. But if ever I'm away more than two whole season without sending back word, untie the ribbons from the broom we jumped mourn for me but a little and set your mind on figuring how you going to stay warm when winter come.

And finally his enslaved wife gets the last word with a poem called real cost.

Somewhere out there he learned to touch me like I'm a woman. And not just some woman, me. In our marriage bed he seem as interested in pleasing me as he be in spilling himself. I knew he come back changed when new words fall out of his life like love and freedom and manhood. And there come a look in his eye like he owned all three, free and clear and don't need no papers to prove it. But it scared me because I see that look in many black high before white hammers nailed it shut or left it frozen open and swinging to teach everyone what smell like courage cost. I have no doubt he would give his life to say with me. So don't tell me that master taking him down south. I just kiss him soft to sleep and stared him long enough to call up his face. When I gets old and thankful he still be breathing somewhere when winter come.

Thank you.

>> ALICESTYNE: Thank you so much, Frank. I would like to remind our audience that Frank X Walker has a website if you would like to know more about his poetry or his books. You are free to visit that website any time. I'm sure there is a connection if you would like to purchase these books.

So, our panelists today, I'm happy to introduce we are fortunate to have with us Dr. Dinah Mayo-Bobee who is Associate Professor of history at East Tennessee State University where she also serves as a graduate coordinator.

Here he is evening focuses on the early run. And she is the aah her to of New England federalists. And art St. Louis in the New England quarterly on slavery and abolition. She has been teaching undergraduate and graduate courses at eastern Tennessee state university Cinco de Mayo 2011. Thank you for joining us in afternoon, Dr. Mayo.

>> DINAH: Good to be here.

>> ALICESTYNE: And the next panelist is Ilene Evans and she is an energetic vibrant performing artist using movement poetry story song and rhythm inspired by rich Affrilachian life and all its folklore to train students. Her historical portrayals of women who changed the world include Harriet Tubman, Bessie Coleman, Ethel Waters, Memphis Tennessee Garrison, is Esanda Robeson, Elizabeth Catlett and Coralie Franklin Cook.

And Anne G'Fellers Mason is the Executive Director of Heritage Alliance and worked for the non-profit over 10 years and has a master of arts history from -- I'm partial to historians -- from East Tennessee State university and Master of Fine Arts and playwriting from Hollins University and puts her research and writing skills to use to craft argue history based plays for the alliance presented in the school's museum and has been presented in Jonesborough's cemetery. She publishes short stories and novels set in Appalachia. Welcome and thank you for joining us, Anne.

>> ANNE: Thank you.

>> ALICESTYNE: We are beginning by talking about a subject most people find very uncomfortable. Talking about the beginnings of early America. So I want to start with Dr. Mayo. And I know the work you have done in talking about the constitution and American citizenship. What would you like to share with the audience what we should know about American slavery and the American constitution?

>> DINAH: Thank you for asking me to be here. One of the important aspects of forming a constitution in the United States that most people don't know was the fact that even though those voices were not plentiful, nor were they as united as they would later become, there was an effort to actually get rid of slavery at the founding. Both in the Articles of Confederation and the U.S. constitution. There Were Some That Felt If You Have to Have Slavery you don't have the free republic. The fact they would eventually enshrine slavery without using the word slavery in the original constitution shows you just the fact that there was some resistance to it.

Most of that came from northerners. And by 1787, when the constitution was being debated, northern states for the most part, north of Pennsylvania had begun to abolish slavery.

So that in itself actually posed an interesting dilemma to creating a nation that would combine free and slave holding states. That is one of the things that my research has uncovered for me.

>> ALICESTYNE: And Ilene, this question for you. You're training young artists to tell the story of people who have been enslaved.

How do you gain their interest in the story? Especially young students who are coming in to the profession, and how Frank does it eloquently with words, what is your method for engaging the students in performance?

>> ILENE: I think stories need to be personal. And so finding ourselves and looking for what we have in common with these people who have gone before us is really, really critical.

One of the questions I will ask is what does this have to do with me? What does this have to do with us today? When we look at the contradictions in the stories we see some of the same challenges we face in the world and in ourselves and with each other. To find the stories I will look for moments where we have something that we can feel from the other -- from that person's journey. From their experience.

When I was reading Memphis Tennessee Garrison and then I listened to her tapes, this is a woman who was able to render stories from her mother and grandfather who were held captive in Virginia just south of West Virginia.

Her father early days came out of the time of slavery into West Virginia to build a new life for them. But she heard these stories over and over again of her granny Roddy who was brought over on one of the last slave ships to the Hollins and Harris and stones plantation. The Harristons they would become later. And she would say that she would climb up on to her grandfathers who bed at the end of the day as a little girl every summer when they would go to his farm that he bought, just 15 acres, five years out of slavery. And she would watch her mother start to take the sav and rub it over his back and when she would sit on the bed she would see there were ridges going that they didn't even go all of them in the same direction. And she would take her little finger and place it on those ridges and she would say granddaddy, what's that?

And he said that's the bull whip. You ain't never going to feel it. Thank God for Abraham Lincoln.

And as she would touch those ridges, tears would just form on her face. And she realized what he had sacrificed for her. When he was a young man, he had run away and he got captured and when he was captured he had been beaten severely. She remembered those stories. And it created an interest in her in those stories.

And her granddaddy would tell her about granny Roddy. A new slave driver would come on the plantation and you can whip any of those people but don't you -- I used the word people. I used the word people. That is not the word that they would use because they were stripped of their humanity. So I come back in my story to remind that we are talking about people.

And so when that woman faced those slave drivers, one of the things they would warn the new people coming in, you can whip all of these others but don't you touch her, she'll kill you. Roddy not only had

strength and power and courage and resistance, she inspired the next generation to remember that they were people.
She told a story of a woman who had a child by the slave driver and she -- it wasn't a very bright child. But it was a child that was loved by a love that the terrific and when she would come in from the field she would look for that child and she would want to spend that time that she could with her. And one day, there were traders who came. They call them nigger traders and that man was a mean man. And he thought how could I hurt that woman. How could I hurt her?

And he thought I will sell that woman's child. And he did. And when that woman came in from the fields that day, she was looking all over for that little girl. She was looking high and low and she couldn't find her and then that man started to laugh at her. He laughed. And when she found out that he had sold her little girl, she went up to him took him by the throat and squeezed.

And he dropped down dead. And Memphis said granddaddy, how did it kill her? And he said well, he pushed too far. Everybody has got a line you must not cross.
And when that woman found out that that child had been taken and sold she had the strength of two men, she just took a step forward grabbed ahold of him and that was the end of that. Did they ever punish her, grand daddy? They didn't know what happened to her after that but they were lessons that people now in the generation following those who had been enslaved carried with them to know that their humanity could not be compromised.

And that they would resist. There are stories that help us know what we have to be proud of. When I tell those kinds of stories we list one a different ear. And we -- we listen with a different ear and find that those ideas replace the images that those people who do not have our best interest at heart have been saying and passing and that is one of those aspects of building in those touch points, those moments in a journey, in a life journey that we can relate to.

None of us want to be used against our will.

>> ALICESTYNE: Thank you. And you mentioned stories which is the great segue for Anne because you are the keeper of stories and the person that we are fortunate whenever as researchers we want to delve as Ilene has done into the wonderful stories. So I would like for you to tell us number one a little bit about what you do and where you are. And how you use the stories to help your community and the heritage hey alliance.

>> ANNE: We are a small alliance in Tennessee. Now the storytelling capital of the world and we honor and treasure our stories here. We have two museums and recent studies have shown that people are trusting what they learn in museums more so than TV or even news outlets right now and that is sacred trust so we take the responsibility highly to make sure that we are sharing all of the history and all voices and all of the stories to the best of our abilities. We know whose voices have been traditionally shared and who hasn't and it is our job to make sure that all of the voices come to the forefront.In our archives predominantly Washington county and Jonesborough history. We do not have as varied and inclusive history as I would like. But I thank the community as a whole -- I think the community as a whole and other archives in the area we work well together to make sure we can find the stories. We have the Washington county archive close to us and they have since we are the county seat a wealth of court records.

And to to try and understand enslavement in Washington county and Jonesborough one of the best places is to go to the court records because you have several dealing with slavery. And court records of free people. Free Blacks who were suing because they were held against their will. Suing because they weren't paid for their work. Suing pause they were beaten while they were working for someone. So you have a wealth of court cases. One of the most iconic is Ford versus Ford where Lloyd Ford left his property essentially his entire estate to his -- the children he had, his enslaved children, his Black children and left very little to his white Heirs.

They contested it. It takes a good 10 years but held in favor of the enslaved children and the children of his own the property and today still you have two different sides of the Ford family but they get together

for reunions now. You have the iconic court cases here. And we have the collection of the local newspapers and you can go to find names, dates, you have got wills also in the archives. Marriage certificates.
So whenever I work on crafting an exhibit or a play, especially our cemetery play, we do a cemetery play and it includes stories from the traditionally white cemetery and the traditionally Black cemetery. Not everyone leaves behind a historical record they say but I would say that is not true. Some you have to dig for more than others but everybody mass a story out there and -- has a story out there and it is our job to help people to find the stories.

>> ALICESTYNE: And you encourage the public to use the resources, correct?

>> ANNE: Our collection is open to the public. Washington county archives is open to the public and we are happy to help who contact us to sort of help with their genealogy or encourage them where they need to look to find the history of their ancestors.

>> ALICESTYNE: Wonderful. Frank, I'm coming to you next because you have written several books and you have talked about York who was a character, first of all, did you learn about York when you were a student? Did you know about York being part of the expedition?

>> FRANK: I did not. I grew up believing that Lewis and Clark did all that by themselves. I was shocked to find out there were 42 people that were part of the expedition and even more shocked that one of them was a Black man.

>> ALICESTYNE: And so when you began to build your archive, your story trail for York, tell us your process. Tell us how you went into it.

>> FRANK: Well, I was fortunate enough to be in the audience for a presentation Hassan Davis assumed the character of York and made this amazing presentation in Louisville, Kentucky. And I was so moved, I went immediately to the Louisville historical society and got a copy of a book called "In Search of York ." It Talked About His Presence In the Journals in detail and gave-page numbers and dates. So it was almost a guide or map to find out more about him if you wanted.
It also talked about how in spite of his honest portrayal in the journals how historians rewrote his character in books and made him look like a buffoon and made his contributions to be less than they were. Even when they described in a more diminutive way than he appeared. He was a large man that resembled an NFL defensive end, he was so big and strong. He.

They were successful that most of the paintings murals that included York represented him as a small character which was a lie. It wasn't until I made it to the St. Louis, so we have all seen the arts in the city skyline, but most people don't know that beneath the ground almost a football field length museum was there that held the largest Lewis and Clark collection in the world. I spent six weekends in a row mostly in the museum reading, taking pictures, writing.
Just immersed in the research because I was so taken by the story and so committed to eliminating my ignorance. Because at that point, I had two degrees and I was embarrassed that I didn't know this about York. And I had kids that I didn't want to pass that ignorance on to. I I wanted to know more.

I wasn't committed to a book, it wasn't until I showed the poems to a friend in Montana who read the poems and was very excited because he lives one mile from the Lewis and Clark trail. I had no idea how big a deal Lewis and Clark was west of the river. Colleges named after them and statues everywhere. Here in Kentucky where I lived and east it just wasn't a big deal and we were coming up on the bicentennial and he convinced me to keep writing the poems until I had enough for a book.

And then I did. And finished it and then almost every reading people ask me about his wife and they want to know more about his wife. I didn't know so I was embarrassed again by that knowledge so I went back and did more research which put me out west at the reservation where I spent do summers in a row with my son and they gave me so much information. To transcribe oral histories and told me to do something with it. The next book is that.

The commitment to unmute silenced voices or to temperature the truth where it has been kind -- or to tell the truth where it has kind of been swept aside or ignored and produce the books and my mother was

laughed because I was so move the by the experience that I got a huge buffalo tattoo. I have a whole herd of buffalo now on my body but York started that.

>> ALICESTYNE: Awesome. And Dr. Mayo, you heard it from the poet. This story is not being taught at universities. Not being taught. At what level are -- is your experience that we are teaching true American history including those unheard voices? The muted voices?

>> DINAH: I have to admit I came here from New England. I'm originally from New York so I am a northerner. But while I was at the you University of Massachusetts Amherst they asked me to teach a course I developed called slavery, the politics of slavery. And that is where I began doing a lot of my research and I had previously done research and published an article in the journal Abolition In Slavery that had to do with slavery in colonial New Hampshire. And found there were a lot of similarities. But as my focus expanded to the national arena, is I began to see that there was a Confluence there that is inescapable. Because once you start looking into the constitution and development of political parties you will run into slavery.

And that is what my dissertation and my book are about. What began to happen as northerners began to question slavery and actually challenge it, southerners, of course, were going the other way and they were coming up with justifications for slavery.

And as the constitutional -- I mentioned the constitutional convention, a lot who complained about slavery then would later go on to become part of the Federalist party and they were appreciated by African Americans who were part of the Wilbur force society and wrote that they were looking after their interests. Black men were voting the federalist party and they began the major complaint against slavery in the constitution with the critique of the three-fifths clause. Most felt that it was unfair. And then as you continue to do the research, I ran into an interesting Congressman named James Elliott who was originally from Massachusetts and moved to Vermont but he was in the area in the wars in the 1790's. When he was touring the area he said that he notice in Kentucky the persons who you were slaves there were not treated like slaves as they were in the south. Said they were treated like human beings. Those were his words and even though he and many others felt that you needed -- that slavery should not be immediately abolished but should be gradual, I thought that was an interesting observation of his.

And put that together with everything that you all said is -- it is very helpful. I also look at the fact that the abolitionist movement came from the persons or generation that followed those who were -- who were Federalists and that is what my book looks at. There is a lot more there and a lot of people don't know. When I teach the course one of the things I notice when I tried to teach it at ETSU it worked out the graduate level but not the undergraduate level. But yet I still had students ask me about slavery and I said where were you when I offered the course.

So it is there and I do think with the current climate that we have perhaps the next time I teach it I will be able to attract undergraduates who really want to know what happened in the nation and how to look at the constitution and what it said. And then, of course, to understand as well that African Americans were in some states considered citizens of those states. I think I was telling but you John Quincy Adams when the Missouri crisis came up, John Quincy Adams said well, if they are going to -- if the Black would imprison Black people the way they wanted to set up the government he said if that happens and they take our citizens he called African Americans and imprison them then we should imprison the white people who come from Missouri to us. So there was an idea, there was always this idea there was an injustice and then you start following that through and you could see that people eventually as we get into the 1820's and 1830's and 1840's you see a more concerted effort to fight against enslavement and to actually treat African Americans as human beings. Took a long time and it is ongoing but that is what a lot of people wanted to do.

>> ALICESTYNE: It is important. I heard several things there that I'm sure our viewers may not be aware of. There were actual states and colonies or states where African Americans could vote. There has always been places in American history where African Americans did have the right to vote and never really lost it. So this idea that we had a voice I think is sometimes overlooked.

And the other aspect of this is the constitutionality and how it was argued, which really did develop the abolitionist movement in eastern Kentucky and east Tennessee, Ann, which I know you are aware is kind of the seat of this abolitionist argument. And I don't know if eastern Appalachia, central Appalachia is aware of the big role that the politics played and do you have anything in your collection if people wanted to do more research on it they could find there in Jonesborough?

>> ANNE: Yeah, we do know that there was a strong abolitionist movement here in Jonesborough, Washington, county. On the counter side, you also had slave holding in Jonesborough from the founding.

You can -- there is a great website that I was checking out today through Lincoln Mullen where you can trace the spread of enslavement in the United States in the census data and go county by county. You have the two populations coexisting ATP same time and a pretty substantial free Black population at the same time as you have enslavement. The core starts in the 18-teens and comes out of the Quaker church. One of the leaders and it is a big sort of anniversary we are commemorate Elihu Embree who published the emancipator which is the first paper dedicated solely to abolitionism. At the same time he is writing this he is an enslaver. In his will he emancipates his slaves.

You have others who were not enslavers and Washington county as a whole as you get closer to the Civil War Embree doesn't get a lot of flack locally maybe part of that is because his family is so well known and maybe, too, because he is and enslaver, he gets more flack from other governors of slave holding states because he makes sure that they get a copy of the paper whether they want it or not. He gets lots of hate mail because of that. The state is about to change and the state constitution is going to get rewritten in the 1830s and become harsher and to what you can or cannot say about slavery and can or cannot do about you enslaved people. The tone of the town as you come up to the Civil War is actually Washington county is going to vote no twice and seceding but a lot of the prominent citizens from Jonesborough are going to enlist within the confederate Army. You have both sides existing in addition to, you know, we have places that were stops for underground.

We think Embree's home place might have been a stop on the underground. Maybe not while he was alive but after the fact. We are just not 100% sure on that. Appalachia is interesting in that you have these two ideas of abolitionism and enslavement coexisting at the same time.

>> ALICESTYNE: And there is so much history in Jonesborough and Washington county. So I definitely encourage those to come do their research. We are getting questions and I'm going to leave this question open to whoever feels they know the answer.

Is there any way to know where in Africa the slaves in Appalachia originated? I was fascinated to discover that this person's DNA came from Gambia. Does anyone know where the bulk of slaves in Appalachia were brought from in Africa?

>> ILENE: If I may, I might say that the experience of slavery in Appalachia is so varied. It so wide and broad and deep. There were people who were brought here in the early 1700's where they have got records in Monongalia county who were brought with families and came with their families and were held here. I know all around Morgantown there were records kept. People who were able to read.

Out of the revolutionary war there were people who got land here. That is one aspect.

The contradictions between living lifestyle how people came to be here and then there are people who were leased and as the industries were growing, people were bought sometimes from like the salt industries but they were also leased for periods of time. So they did not have agency. West Virginia also was a place where if you were educated or free, you weren't necessarily welcome to stay according to Virginia law.

But the laws on this western part of Appalachia of the mountains were not enforced. And so if the town people, the people who you lived around would be amenable, you would be left in peace. And for some people they had that kind of experience. There were the mixed families. There were families even Dr. Bickley who wrote a lovely play, I was able to do called "The Crossing" is about a woman who is finally freed by her white master with her children from him after many years and sent across the river to Ohio where he deems they will be safe. And it is at a time in his life where he sees his life is coming to an end and there are

those people who have a sense of guilt, mercy or deference in some way. There is not one story to be told in Appalachia. There is not one experience that is common.

These are not only chain gangs, sometimes this was also a breeding area. This was a place where they saw as an opportunity to expand after -- across since they couldn't bring people overseas, they could grow the market in domestic slavery. And so West Virginia is still a picture of all of the different issues. We have examples of all of the different points of view from abolitionists, those who came to West Virginia specifically to work on the underground.

We have that not far from me in Preston county where there were barrel makers who came and not all of those barrels left empty.

And Highway 50, the one that goes straight through West Virginia, what is took on gangs that people remember and the songs that people would sing and hear the chain gangs moving through the night. And the eerie echoing of this second life, this second reality going on from day to night.

There is not just one answer to that kind of a question here. We come from all over. And for many different reasons. And --

>> ALICESTYNE: And the important -- that idea of sharing that central Appalachia especially when you got into industry a lot of those slaves were brought from the east coast, leasing. Slave leasing was a very big deal in Appalachia. So you could be not originally from this region but your ancestors may have settled here maybe at some point.

So I know that when we are talking about arrivals some of the first slaves that came to the United States came from Angola. But West Africa, those are Nigerian landing, a lot of Nigerians who arrived in the area. I think it is also important for people to understand that slaves were not just arbitrarily brought to the country. Many slaves were brought because of their skill sets in Africa. If you were looking for someone who was accustomed to mining, you go to the African nation that has the best miners or if you are looking for someone who deals with cattle or, you know, you bring slaves from those regions.

So it was a very scientific thought about who you captured and brought to the country. It was not just rolling up on the shores and grabbing people. There was that, too. But you also had markets where you actually bought specialized areas people from specialized areas. So that is a good question and maybe a good research project for the viewer.

Frank, this question is for you. It is from a person who is from Charlottesville and she says Lewis and Clark expedition is a very big deal in Charlottesville and she would like to know or the writer would like to know if York was ever in Charlottesville.

>> FRANK: Charlottesville, Virginia?

>> ALICESTYNE: Yes.

>> FRANK: I'm not sure but if Clark was there, probably so. Immingle traveled with him. One of the things that was hard to find documentation of exactly where York was, but we were able to find enough information to create a whole new map that goes in Buffalo Dance the First Book Titled Lewis and Clark and York and a lot of places have updated some of the own information. Each my hometown of Danville, Kentucky, Lexington and Louisville, Kentucky, there are old historical markers that document that Lewis and Clark were there but they rarely mention anybody else. I think added to the idea and mythology behind the two men. So.

>> ALICESTYNE: But you stated they had 42 men. Were they all from Kentucky?

>> FRANK: Nine young men from Kentucky. When Lewis came east to the falls of the Ohio, what we now know as the cross road from Louisville, Kentucky, to pick up the men from Kentucky and York and Clark they went up the river to just west of -- east of St. Louis and spent the winter there, adding even more men. But the time they had a full party, 41 men and one woman who was actually a 15-year-old young woman with a brand new three-month-old baby. A lot of people don't know that. Most history books just mention Lewis and Clark.

>> ALICESTYNE: So more work to be done on York and probably a good point to add that we are not even certain where York is buried, correct?

>> DINAH:

>> FRANK: Absolutely. Or if he is buried. He could be like 200 years old. A lot of information on his life, on his death bed Clark said to a reporter that York died on the way home to be his slave again and he promised York the freedom he earned after the expedition. He opened up a freight hauling. He tried to find his wife that disappeared because once he returned the owner move and he never saw her again. Kind of a Shakespearean tragedy but he married a woman who was a daughter of a chief on the expedition and she bore him a son loss named York. And they talk about the Courtship and the marriage and talks about the child.

And those who have York ancestry are revered and proud of the Ness Pearce family. I had a chance to dine and have lunch with almost two dozen descendants of York in east Oregon on the reservation and back here in Kentucky there is no evidence of any off spring or no records of any off spring discovered at all. So it's you know, it's a weird situation. We can imagine they did produce children but we can't even find the name of his enslaved wife so that put us as a great disadvantage.

>> ALICESTYNE: I have a viewer who says that she as a Black history book she had from the 1970's when attending high school and has been using that book to teach history to her fellow students and what resources, what other resources are available to teach my grand children and their children? Is there knowledge about the locations and areas of the underground for instance? I would say to our viewer tune in next month, that's public discussion for October is underground and we will be talking about that.
But this viewer makes a good point that when it comes to history books and I will open this up to everyone, give us at least one good recommendation of someone who really wants to study early African American history prior to the Civil War or any other books that you think would be good for this era?

>> DINAH: Well, Dr. Turley and the viewer, if someone is really interested and just a general read and something that is a really good read, the historian Paul Finkelman wrote for example slavery and the founders. He also -- his name is good to look up because he has done a lot of legal work with slave -- with cases involving slavery. He just most recently wrote a book about the Supreme Court and slavery how their decisions had an impact on African Americans and on their lives.
But I think his book if you should be able to get ahold of it, that looks at all of these cases. It is fascinating. Because you think as Dr. Evans was saying slavery was not a monolithic entity. The slaves had different types of experiences everywhere in the country.

To find out for example the slaves left property by their white masters who were also their fathers would end up getting their property. Those types of things are important to know. Not every slave had to deal with the injustices and the violence of the large plantation societies but many people don't know that there was a plantation society in Narragansett, Rhode Island. There is a lot out there. Start with Paul Finkelman's work. Read most of his work. I look at the politics are slavery but there are several really good books and one of the older ones but a I call it a goody is slavery in the age of revolution by Brian Davis. That is a really good book if you want to learn about slavery. He did two books. And those are good and really readable to you would be able to share those with children.

>> ALICESTYNE: Foundational. Brian Davis books very foundational books. What about Ilene, when you are teaching?

>> ILENE: It depends on what -- well, you know, boy there is so much more now than there was when I started at this. And so it depends on what you are really looking for.

If you are looking for children books, Virginia Hamilton. Irene smalls. I can give you author's names of those kinds of accessible books that I think are helpful, what I was saying is how do you get people in it and to tell story.

They see themselves and when the illustrated books, we have so much more from Brian Pinckney and persons at it a long time. Walter dean Myers. A number of names that have given imagery to help us see our journey and help us imagine ourselves in that time. I like children's books to get started.

But the academic books are many. And one of the ones that helped me walk through the aspects of unexpected stories was Red Key book on a Grabbed Army of. It is the letters from the men in the United States colored troops. And during the Civil War it is a British author who has collected these incredibly articulate and poignant letters from soldiers that give you a picture not only of their life beforehand, some are pre and some entrepreneurs and have their own business and some newly freed and able to render stories from their own enslavement. But the level of literacy that was in pockets in areas this particular collection of letters I think is so telling. But the man's last name is Redkey and it is not coming to mind right now. But I have those suggestions of authors.

>> DINAH: Dr. Turley.

>> ALICESTYNE: Yes, yes.

>> DINAH: I would suggest to go to because so many people are tide to the internet. Go to the Gilda Lehrman (phonetic) site. They have information there are for people at various levels so that could be helpful to anyone who wants to really impart to young people and old people alike what slavery was like and what was happening in the United States and I think they actually branch inside world history. I may be incorrect but it is still a good site.

>> ALICESTYNE: These are all good resource and I would encourage people the tool kit that h be online with the international story telling center each of the panelists are submitting book lists to us and we will share those with you. Another site to visit is the International Storytelling Center tool kit for the Freedom Stories because there are many good titles out there and we will make sure that we list those. Lots of questions. This one is a question of how many freed Blacks actually owned their own slaves?
We talked about free Blacks being in the region. The questioner wants to know how many owned slaves?

>> ANNE: I can't speak to that exactly but there is a case file in Appalachia ESU Adam Waterford versus Isaac Baker and in the case one of the things that took Waterford to court was it did he, it he was a free man of color but did he sell his brother who was enslaved to baker to settle a debt.

>> ALICESTYNE: I have to let the viewer and questioner know, you will see a lot of free Blacks who own slaves if you look through the records but if you trace it down you find that many of the people they own are family members.
And so the only way that a Black person could emancipate another Black person is if they owned them. So many times family members would buy other family members in order to, first of all, keep them from being sold to someone else. And the other is to eventually get enough money to emancipate them. It required bonds. You had to set a bond for every free Black person that was in your community. There is a lot more involved. It wasn't just a matter of setting people free. You had to have a plan of who is responsible for these free Black people.

This is a course that could be taught all on its own about emancipation and how that looks in the real world. Ilene, a questioner wants to know from you, did mixed race people cross county or state lines to pass for white?

>> ILENE: I'm sure there were. I mean we have modern movies even when we look at Ethel Waters. Pinky is about a woman who passes. There is the story of that.
In I want to say the folk culture and folk life culture of those who pass, but there are also those who did not. And decided to continue to remain true to their family roots and legacy. My mother would be one who could have passed but didn't. Might be one of the whitest Black women you ever met but she was seriously and this was her culture and she Claimed it. And when I look at how many I can't say how many. I know that there were. I know that the fear, the desperation, the sense of danger that came with it. Understand that race in -- well, if we talk about Appalachia, if people were designated colored, they had no national claim on whether it was -- if they were Native American it was treaty rights. So we have aspects of Indian and

Africans marrying or blended families. If they would deny or denounce their tribal treaty rights, now they are a non-person. Colored was a development.

So you weren't Nigerian Or Senegalese. You could not call a nation once you were designate the as colored. So to lump so many people in that category of colored, colored was a legal -- it became a legal disenfranchisement of their not only humanity but their legal ability to make an appeal.

I don't know what Dr. Mayo would say about that constitutionally and the law that goes with it but in West Virginia this was an enormous disenfranchisement for both native people and Black folks.

>> DINAH: I know you're right and I just happened to be looking at the debates over the Articles of Confederation the nation's first constitution and one of the things that came up of the militia service and they decided that Black, people who were Negroes and Mullatos and Indians would not be available for militia service. One of the Congressmen said let's insert the word white. What they did in the articles and the constitution to some extent insert the word right in so that erases everybody else. Under special circumstances they could be chosen for a state militia but the norm was no, it would be only white persons that they could requisition. So you are right, it was a legal disenfranchisement.

Now I did talk to Brian Davis a few years ago and he was mentioning the fact that Native Americans always had sort of an out after the formation of the government because the English settlers in the American colonies that became the U.S. felt a bit guilty about it and they didn't want to enslave Native Americans. Sometimes African Americans could actually escape slavery by claiming to be of Native American inheritance, heritage. But still, up close and personal that is when you really find out what people thought and you -- if you could pass for white, if people could pass for white a lot of them did. We know that some of Jefferson's children like Sally Hemmings did. And some didn't. And then you ultimately set up for the discrimination that people of darker color would endure. It was the polyglot of mistreatment. Depending where you were is it was okay. People maybe in New Hampshire or other places turned a little bit of a blind eye but still, color disenfranchised you to a great extent in a lot of different places. I don't know if that is what you meant, Dr. Evans but that's --

>> ILENE: That's a part of it because when people are desperate and want to move to help themselves in some way they will do things that are morally ambiguous and try to make the best of their conscience. You know.

>> DINAH: That is why I always have my students, I always tell them if you are interested in slavery and ideas about slavery whether they like it or not and I know it doesn't have positive connotations but they really should read Stowe's uncle Tom's cabin "Because the Idea of Passing for While. And How People Would Put Makeup On Them they would put different makeup on so hues in their skin would not show up. They did this because they to travel place to place. And if they could get to the western some of the places where they were not known, then they could live basically in freedom. There is was something to all of that.

And.

>> ALICESTYNE: I'm going to put a plug in here for our November public discussion which is about Appalachia. We have the continuing storyline of all of the questions that people are asking. We are running out of time and I want to throw this last question to Frank because a question about the WPA records and if they are a good source for finding information. We were talking about people researching their history. What would you like to share on that?

>> FRANK: I would say the WPA records are an excellent source but almost every state generally the flagship university has archives that are underused. People talk about going to the library but the library archives are even better because you get all of these amazing records that some of them haven't been touched since they were donated or contributed or put on file. One of the most amazing things for my students especially the grad students they are required to go to the archives and find a subject they didn't know much about and find some brand new material that they find inspiring. And then try to find a voice to connect to the material and then write a poem based on that and then a series of poems. But they always

write their best stuff from the archival information. And the thing that makes is so good is that they only pick things that make them go wow, I didn't know this.

And because they know they think they know everything and then the opportunity to bring to life to other people is just a gift. Absolutely, WPA records if you want to get a sense of or access to the slave narratives, if you want to seek visual art from the same time period. But you know, there is some discussion about some kind of repeat of WPA going forward to get us out of this crept state in American society. But that would be excellent if that really happened. But absolutely. Library archives. Every city everywhere. Historical societies. The records Ann was talking about. Marital records. Death certificates. Birth records. U.S. census. A lot of stuff is online in places you might not be able to visit but if it is digitized it is almost like being there.

>> ALICESTYNE: Exactly. Believe it or not, we are out of time. Time went so quickly. I want to thank each of our panelists for joining us for the wonderful discussion. We have many more questions. Many of them talking about where do you find the resources and we will help you out with that on the International Storytelling Center website.

And also encouraging all of you as educators to please look at how this history is presented in textbooks, particularly with children and college students. Leaving that charge with you from the summary of the questions I would like to thank our viewers and ask to join us in October. It is a little bit different day. We are going to do this Thursday, October 1 as the beginning of the International Storytelling Center festival. Same time. Same location. Just a different topic. We are talking about the underground in American history and in Appalachia. Thank you for joining us and we look for you October 1. Thank you, panelists.

>> Thank you, thank you, thank you.