

tain parties have claimed the right to have bound to them all the oldest and largest of the children of emancipated slaves, and are holding many of them, and leaving the mothers alone with the young and helpless ones, and raising the cry that they will starve, whereof, if they had their large children they could make a good living as they got from their master, and much better, and near all of these children have been bound out against the will of the parents and children while there is no law in Maryland to justify such acts. Some of these children would bring in to their mothers' from 15 to 20 dollars per month, if they had them to themselves. Many of the mothers have husbands in the armies of the United States and need the services of their children, with which they can make a good living. These colored persons have come to me to know what they shall do in the matter, and I have thought it best to consult you before I gave them advice in the matter, and they are waiting to know what they must do, and while I know that there is no law for what has been done, I deem it best to ask of you what should be done in the case of taking their children from them and holding them against their will. You will please write to me what the nature of the case is, so that I can inform them how to act and what they may then depend on. Anything you may wish to know about the state of things here I will write to you at any time you may ask.

All the officers of this county are of the party opposed to the free State system, and have co-operated with the parties in binding out these children, which leaves the mothers nothing but the military to look up to for protection, for they have gone in the night with threats to make them consent to bind to their former masters their children, and some have gone so far as to whip them when they would not agree to what they wanted them. I write to you in behalf and at the request of the emancipated slaves of this District, and if I have asked properly, please answer as soon as you can and let me know what to say to the parties above named, and you will oblige the many destitute and outraged persons who are looking up to you for protection. If you will be so kind as to answer this you will address,

E. T. HALL,

*James Town, Potato Neck, Somerset Co., Md.*

*Endorsed*—“States that some 150 to 200 colored persons have been set free in that District, through the new constitution, who are all able to support themselves, but informs that certain parties claim to have the oldest and largest bound to them against their parents will, requests an answer for further information as how to act.”