

first base, and I was the catcher."

"You must have been pretty good players if you won a championship."

"I think we were pretty good," said Marian.

"Well, what if you hadn't been allowed to play but had to sit on the bench all the time? What if the only contribution you could make was to sit on the bench, maybe make sure that the other players' equipment was OK? Would your team have been as good then as it was? Think you could have won your championship that way?"

"No way!" Casey looked at Cephas. "There's no way we could have won without A. J. He was the best pitcher in the league. And nobody on our team could play first base as well as Marian, either."

"So, if the coach kept the best players on the bench, it would have been hard for the team to win, right?"

"Sure," said A. J.

"Do you think your coach gave everybody a chance to do their best and make important contributions to the team?"

"He sure did," Casey said.

"Now think about that. That's the really terrible, hurtful thing about slavery. Sure, it's horrible for those who are the slaves, but it really hurts everyone when anyone is not allowed to make their best contributions. After all, we're all in this together, right?"

"Right," said Marian. Then she looked at A. J. and Casey and held up her arm. "Particularly, we three musketeers."

Casey and A. J. put their hands up to Marian's and looked at Cephas. "Come on, Cephas, All for One."

Cephas joined hands with the three friends and said, "And One for All."

A. J.'s Journal

Lakeport

This week was our worst so far. If it hadn't been for Aunt Clara, I wouldn't have made it through the week. I would have completely starved to death.

Every morning before it got light, a man called an overseer would blow a loud horn to wake us up. We had to get up as fast as we could and go outside to eat while it was still dark. The only thing we had for breakfast was that awful cornmeal mush. It was cooked outside in a great big pot and then poured into one great big, hollowed-out tree trunk. We had to sit on the ground and use long wooden spoons to get what we could to eat.

As soon as it was light, the overseer came and organized us into work teams and off we went to whatever jobs he assigned us. About noon we got some corn bread and maybe a sweet potato to eat where we were working. We'd work until almost dark and then head back to our cabins and eat more cornbread or mush and maybe some fried pork. They called that fatback.

Casey and Marian and I slept in different cabins. I slept in a bed with two brothers. There was another bed for their mother and father, but there was only one room. If we shut the door, it got way too hot to sleep; if we left the door open, the mosquitoes got in and feasted on us.

After the second day, I was so tired and hungry that I almost cried myself to sleep. That's when Aunt Clara saved me. She was the cook at the big house. She