Even this, however, does not tell the full story of the rapid increase of slavery in Alabama because some parts of the state had far greater increases than other parts. Examples of counties with heavy slave populations were Greene, Sumter, Marengo, Dallas, Wilcox, and Lowndes. Examples of counties with few slaves were Jackson, Marshall, DeKalb, Calhoun, St. Clair, Blount, Jefferson, Winston, Walker, Marion, Fayette, Covington, Coffee, and Dale. Except where the story has been changed by the growth of cities, as in Jefferson County, most of the counties listed with few slaves have relatively small Negro populations today. Counties which had many slaves in antebellum times have large Negro populations today.

The price of slaves varied greatly with time and circumstance, including the age and skill of the slave. A price of $400 or $500 was low for a young adult, while $2,000 was a high price for a highly skilled slave. A dollar then would buy much more than a dollar now.

**Free Negroes in Alabama During Slavery Times**

When Alabama became a state in 1819 there were 500 free Negroes within our boundaries. Only one Negro out of 85 was free. By 1860 the number of free Negroes in Alabama had grown to 2,690. Although this was a great increase in free Negroes, these had not increased as rapidly as had slaves. Among Negroes it was even more of a distinction to be a free man in 1860 than it had been in 1820.

When Negroes were freed, they rarely remained as farmers in the country. Most of them went to live in the larger towns of the state. In such towns they could enjoy their freedom more and find better paying jobs. Free Negroes were most numerous in the following counties: Baldwin, Montgomery, Tuscaloosa, Madison, and Mobile. Four of these five counties contained the larger towns of Alabama: Montgomery, Tuscaloosa, Huntsville, and Mobile. Mobile County in 1840 contained about one-third of all the free Negroes in the entire state. Twenty-three years later one-half of the state's free Negroes lived in Mobile County. Most of these lived in the city of Mobile, which was by far the largest town in Alabama during all the antebellum period.

In Mobile and other Alabama towns free Negroes found work as carpenters, bricklayers, painters, blacksmiths, butchers, plasterers, coppersmiths, laborers, draymen, mattress makers, cooks, shoemakers, cigar makers, boatmen, and barbers. Barbering was one of the most highly regarded of the occupations of free Negroes. Free Negroes had a society of their own and had a good time in each others' company. Did you know that some free Negroes themselves owned slaves? When free Negroes and slaves married, their children took the status of the mother. This is to say that the children