

# TESTIMONY

TAKEN BY

THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE

TO INQUIRE INTO

## THE CONDITION OF AFFAIRS IN THE LATE INSUR- RECTIONARY STATES.

ALABAMA—Continued.

HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA, October 9, 1871.

WILLIAM MATHEWS (colored) sworn and examined.

By the CHAIRMAN :

*Question.* Were you a witness against William Henderson, a colored man, on an examination had before Commissioner Day in this place ?

*Answer.* Yes, sir.

*Question.* Did you testify that Henderson was a man of bad character ?

*Answer.* Yes, sir ; I testified that, but I was bound to do it ; I could not help myself.

*Question.* What was the reason of that ?

*Answer.* If I had not sworn that, when I went back—for everything I possessed was there—they said that I might, perhaps, have been treated worse than he was.

*Question.* Who did you live with at that time ?

*Answer.* With Mr. Whit Newsome.

*Question.* How near was that to William Malone ?

*Answer.* I don't know, sir ; I guess it is about two or three or four miles. I never was over to Mr. Malone's place in my life. I was cooking for Whit Newsome.

*Question.* What did Whit Newsome have to do with the Henderson affair ?

*Answer.* Well, sir, Mr. Holsapple was his brother-in-law ; that is the way he was interested about it.

*Question.* Who told you to swear the way you did ?

*Answer.* Mr. Newsome told me.

*Question.* Did he tell you he wanted to protect Holsapple ?

*Answer.* Yes, sir.

*Question.* Did you swear to the truth in that examination ?

*Answer.* No, sir.

*Question.* You may tell the committee now what kind of a man William Henderson is and was at that time.

*Answer.* I never has found nothing wrong with William Henderson. He always showed me good partiality, and both to white and colored, as far as I can say. Him and Mr. Malone had a little scrape there together once, and they all got down on him on that account. That is all I could say.

*Question.* Did he have a good character among the colored people?  
*Answer.* Yes, sir.  
*Question.* How was he respected among the white people, except Malone?  
*Answer.* He was respected every way by all every way except Mr. Malone and a few others around there, Mr. —, I can't think of his name, and the two men that were here that served him the act that they did.  
*Question.* You wish to recant all you said in your former examination?  
*Answer.* Yes, sir.  
*Question.* Was there another colored man who testified against him?  
*Answer.* Yes, sir.  
*Question.* Did he swear against Henderson for the same reason that you did?  
*Answer.* Yes, sir; that is what he told me. I can't say whether it is so for certain or not, but he told me that.  
*Question.* Who was he working for?  
*Answer.* He was working for William Malone, the other colored man was.  
*Question.* Did he say he swore as he did on account of fear of Malone?  
*Answer.* No, sir; he was paid for it.  
*Question.* Paid for swearing as he did?  
*Answer.* He told me he would get \$50 when he got home.  
*Question.* What was his name?  
*Answer.* His name was Jim Carter.

By Mr. BUCKLEY:

*Question.* Since this trial have you been living with Mr. Newsome?  
*Answer.* Yes, sir.  
*Question.* Do you live there now?  
*Answer.* No, sir.  
*Question.* When did you leave there?  
*Answer.* I left there four weeks to-day.  
*Question.* Where do you live now?  
*Answer.* I stay out here with Alfred Cleary.  
*Question.* Near Huntsville?  
*Answer.* Yes, sir; right across here. I had to leave there; I could not stay there.

By the CHAIRMAN:

*Question.* Why did you have to leave?  
*Answer.* I was engaged to get married to a woman, and she come over there to Mr. Newsome's, and I went off with her that night to her house, and the next morning he 'lowed that I didn't attend to my business; that I was running all over the whole country, and he expected to handle me for it, and he took my clothes from me and gave them to another colored man; so I come away. He took all my clothing and my wages. I never got none of my wages at all from him.  
*Question.* How much is due from Mr. Newsome to you?  
*Answer.* Ten dollars is due.  
*Question.* Does he refuse to pay you?  
*Answer.* Yes, sir.

By Mr. BECK:

*Question.* Jim Carter, did you say, was this man?  
*Answer.* Yes, sir.  
*Question.* Where did Jim Carter tell you he was to be paid for swearing the way he did?  
*Answer.* He told me that down at the depot, sir.  
*Question.* When?  
*Answer.* Me and him was sitting together that same night that the trial came on here, like as if it was to-day, and it was that night. He was at the depot to see; we was all taking the train for home; he could not get home until Sunday morning. Me and him was in chat together, and he told me that himself.  
*Question.* Is he a colored man of pretty good character?  
*Answer.* Yes, sir; as far as I know. I never was in his company but once in my life, and that was when he came here.  
*Question.* How long had you known William Henderson?  
*Answer.* I have known William Henderson ever since the 14th of March.  
*Question.* Last March?  
*Answer.* Yes, sir.  
*Question.* Where was he working when you knew him?  
*Answer.* At Mr. Goodloe's.  
*Question.* Had you never known him before that?  
*Answer.* No, sir.  
*Question.* What white men have you ever heard give him a good character since then?

*Answer.* I have never heard any white men but Mr. Goodloe speak well of him. I never heard none say anything about him more than them he was in attack with.  
*Question.* You have told the committee, have you not, that he had a good character from both white and black?  
*Answer.* Yes, sir; so far as I can say.  
*Question.* What white man have you ever heard give him a good character?  
*Answer.* I have heard Mr. Thorn, down at Cherokee, say Henderson was a pretty clever fellow, and always paid his debts. No difference what he owed, he always tried to pay.  
*Question.* Is that the only white man you have ever heard talk of him?  
*Answer.* That is the only one I have heard speak of him so far.  
*Question.* That is the only knowledge you have of what white men say of his character?  
*Answer.* Yes, sir.  
*Question.* Where is he living now?  
*Answer.* William Henderson?  
*Question.* Yes, sir.  
*Answer.* He is here in Huntsville.  
*Question.* When did you tell him you wanted to come here and admit that you had sworn falsely at the examination?  
*Answer.* I told him so on Friday, last Friday.  
*Question.* Did you hunt him up or did he hunt you?  
*Answer.* He didn't hunt me and I didn't hunt him. I was draying, and in passing I saw him, and spoke to him and he spoke to me.  
*Question.* Who brought on the conversation?  
*Answer.* I did.  
*Question.* What did you say to him?  
*Answer.* I called him and told him a man had told me that he had been inquiring whether I was in the town, and he told me that he didn't inquire for any one, and I told him he needn't think any way hard of me for swearing against him in this court, for he knew how it was below as well as I did, and I was willing to come here and testify that I was wrong and could not help myself.  
*Question.* What did Whit Newsome tell you to say about your testimony?  
*Answer.* He told me to come here and swear that Henderson had no principle nor character amongst neither white nor color.  
*Question.* What else did he tell you?  
*Answer.* There is a great many other little things he told me that he wanted me to say, but I can't recollect.  
*Question.* Did he threaten you?  
*Answer.* He told me I had better do as he said, for if I didn't I couldn't stay there, for probably I might be treated in the same expects that he was or worse, but by who he couldn't say to me.  
*Question.* Was that before the trial came on?  
*Answer.* Yes, sir.  
*Question.* How long before?  
*Answer.* It was four days before the trial.  
*Question.* You did come to swear to a lie?  
*Answer.* Yes, sir; I did come to swear to a lie.  
*Question.* Was whatever else you stated on that trial true, except what you said as to the character of that man?  
*Answer.* I can't say nothing about anything; but what I swore myself I can speak of that.  
*Question.* I ask if whatever else you said on that trial was true, except as to what you stated as to Henderson's character?  
*Answer.* No, sir; what I said on that trial there was nothing of it true; nothing at all except one thing. I spoke about me and him having a little cross words on the road, which we met by ourselves together, and after these white men had to come here and be tried; they call that in too.  
*Question.* So that your whole testimony, from beginning to end on that trial, was a lie?  
*Answer.* Yes, sir; the whole testimony was not true at all.  
*Question.* Did Whit Newsome ask you to swear to anything else except the bad character of this man?  
*Answer.* He asked me would I swear where Mr. Holsapple was the night Henderson was carried to the river. I told him I could not swear, because I didn't know where Mr. Holsapple was, because I had been to the mill that day. His mill was broken open that night that Henderson was taken to the river, and some flour was taken out, and he wanted me to swear that Mr. Holsapple was at his mill. I told him I didn't know where Mr. Holsapple was that night. Then he came back to me in the kitchen, where I was by myself, and he sat down in a chair, and said, "I tell you, William, you have

got to do as I tell you, or probably you may be done worse than Henderson was, or treated in the same expects, or worse expects."

*Question.* Is there anything else connected with your testimony, about which he made any statement, except that, that you recollect?

*Answer.* No, sir; not that I recollect.

*Question.* I want you to think, as well as you can, whether Newsome went any further than to get you to swear to Henderson's bad character, and trying to get you to swear where Halseapple was. Do you think that was all?

*Answer.* Yes, sir; I think that was all.

*Question.* That being the case, I want to ask you this question: You swore on that examination, as I see by the testimony here, that William Henderson had a conversation on the road with you, and said that if he could get a party of men like himself, and kill out all the G—d—n white men and yellow niggers, the State would be better than it is. Albert Goodloe was there.

*Answer.* Yes, sir; I did state that.

*Question.* Did Mr. Newsome or anybody else tell you to say that?

*Answer.* Yes, sir; I was told to say that.

*Question.* Who told you to say that?

*Answer.* Mr. Newsome told me.

*Question.* Why did you not tell me when I asked you as important a thing as that?

*Answer.* I didn't remember it.

*Question.* You had forgotten that?

*Answer.* Yes, sir.

*Question.* And this conversation William Henderson had with you on the road coming here, you say?

*Answer.* Coming here?

*Question.* Was it not on the road coming here?

*Answer.* No, sir.

*Question.* Where did you locate that?

*Answer.* We were working the public road from Barton Station to Cherokee, and me and him got into a dispute. I was working with a parcel of white men; he was working with a crowd of colored. I was sitting down. The whole party, white and colored, that was working together, was sitting down, and Henderson came along and said, "William Mathews, why aint you at work?" I told him, "Go on; that is always the way with a nigger; he is always meddling with what he has no business." That brought us into a little cross-questioning together, but we made that over—made it up together.

*Question.* What was the cross-questioning?

*Answer.* He was intending to whip me that day on the road.

*Question.* Who was?

*Answer.* Henderson; and he came to me. I was on a horse riding in the road, carrying the overseer's horse up the road to him, and Henderson stepped up to me and said, "William Mathews, what did you say about me on the road?" I told him I didn't say nothing more about him than any one else. He says, "I am out here on purpose to make you whip me or I whip you." I told him, "If you can't take a joke, you oughtn't to be in a party at all." That about all the yellow niggers and white people, Mr. Newsome told me to say that himself.

*Question.* How did Newsome know of this quarrel between you and Henderson?

*Answer.* I and him was in the kitchen together that night, and Mr. Nelson told him that Henderson wanted to whip me on the road, and he wouldn't let him do it, and wouldn't let us fight. There is where he got hold of it.

*Question.* What did he say that night in the kitchen about that?

*Answer.* He told me that night that I must mind; that I had to come back the road next day, and I must raise no fusses on the road at all; that I was a stranger in the country, and had nobody to protect me in the country but them, and I had better be careful.

*Question.* How did you come to swear to that statement on the trial?

*Answer.* Because I was told to do it.

*Question.* Who told you, and when were you told?

*Answer.* Mr. Newsome told me, but I can't say what day of the month it was that I was told; but he told me to do it.

*Question.* Tell us what he told you to say.

*Answer.* He told me to come up here and swear against Henderson's character and principle, he did, and he told me to swear where Mr. Halseapple was the night his mill got broken open. I told him I couldn't swear about the mill, because I didn't know where Mr. Halseapple was that night. He got up then and went into the house, and came back, and told me, "William, you had better do as I say, for probably you may be treated with the same expects or worse than Henderson was, and if you don't go and swear something for these men you can leave here; and if you gets a way, you may probably never be any account to yourself."

*Question.* Do you again repeat that last statement which you have just made as the substance of what Mr. Newsome told you?

*Answer.* Yes, sir.

*Question.* I ask you again, if that is the substance of what he told you, how came you to swear that Henderson said to you, on the road, that if he could get a party like himself, and kill all the G—d—n white men and yellow niggers in the State, it would be better off? If Newsome did not tell you to do it, why did you swear it?

*Answer.* He did tell me to do it.

*Question.* Have you not repeated to me twice what he told you to do, and left that out?

*Answer.* He told me to swear that.

*Question.* When and where did he tell you to swear that?

*Answer.* Right in his own kitchen.

*Question.* Why have you failed to state that he told you to swear that, though I have twice called your attention to it?

*Answer.* I told you that twice.

*Question.* You have already stated that Mr. Newsome told you to swear that?

*Answer.* Yes, sir; he told me to swear everything that I did swear.

*Question.* You say Albert Goodloe was there; who was he?

*Answer.* He lives on Mr. Goodloe's place.

*Question.* Why did you say he was there?

*Answer.* I was told to say so.

*Question.* Was Albert Goodloe there?

*Answer.* He was working in the party of men, but I do not know whether Albert heard that expression made or not.

*Question.* Was that expression made?

*Answer.* If it was I didn't hear it.

*Question.* Who told you to say Albert Goodloe was there?

*Answer.* Mr. Newsome told me to say so.

*Question.* At the same time that he told you to swear as to Henderson's bad character?

*Answer.* Yes, sir.

*Question.* And you swore to that falsehood, also, because he told you to?

*Answer.* Yes, sir.

*Question.* Is Henderson living in this town also now?

*Answer.* He is in this town. I don't know whether he is living here or not. I can't say. I have never been to his house. I see him on the street every day.

*Question.* Who are you living with?

*Answer.* Alfred Cleary.

*Question.* A white or a colored man?

*Answer.* A colored man.

*Question.* Where did you live before you went to Mr. Newsome?

*Answer.* I was with John Robinson's circus before I went to Mr. Newsome's.

*Question.* Traveling around the country with a circus?

*Answer.* Yes, sir.

*Question.* What were you doing with the circus?

*Answer.* Tending to the horses.

*Question.* A driver or rubber?

*Answer.* Rubber.

*Question.* How long had you been with the circus?

*Answer.* Twelve months.

*Question.* Where were you when Robinson & Co.'s circus employed you?

*Answer.* At Augusta, Georgia, Richmond County.

*Question.* How long had you lived there, and what were you doing there?

*Answer.* I was born and raised there.

*Question.* Who was you living with when Robinson's circus picked you up?

*Answer.* With my old master.

*Question.* What is his name?

*Answer.* Thomas S. Oliver.

*Question.* You had lived with him all your days?

*Answer.* Yes, sir.

*Question.* What is his post-office?

*Answer.* He was a farmer.

*Question.* Do you recollect the name of the post-office where you got your letters?

*Answer.* Augusta post-office.

*Question.* Do you mean in the city of Augusta?

*Answer.* Yes, sir.

*Question.* Did Thomas S. Oliver get his letters in the city of Augusta, and was that his post-office?

*Answer.* Yes, sir.

*Question.* Why did you quit the circus ?

*Answer.* They didn't have no further use or employment for me.

*Question.* Did Mr. Newsome take a suit of clothes away from you that belonged to you ?

*Answer.* Yes, sir.

*Question.* Had you paid for them ?

*Answer.* Yes, sir.

*Question.* Where did he find these clothes ?

*Answer.* My pants was in his kitchen, and my shirt at the woman's house that washed for me.

*Question.* Did he go and take them ?

*Answer.* Yes, sir.

*Question.* Did you see him take them ?

*Answer.* He took them and put them on another man, and I went right to the place. He took them at night, and the next morning he put them on another man, and I went and saw them on the man, and I asked him before Mr. Newsome's face how he came by my clothes. He said Mr. Newsome gave them to him.

*Question.* And he refused you your wages ?

*Answer.* Yes, sir.

*Question.* What is Mr. Newsome's post-office ; where does he get his letters ?

*Answer.* Cherokee.

*Question.* In what county ?

*Answer.* Colbert County.

*Question.* What is his first name ?

*Answer.* Whit Newsome.