

"The Poor Darkies," Lancaster (PA) *Examiner*, December 31, 1856  
<https://stampedes.dickinson.edu/document/lancaster-pa-examiner-poor-darkies-december-31-1856>

THE POOR DARKIES.—Christmas is the great, if not the only holiday allowed to the slaves of the Southern States; it comes but once a year to them, in a double sense, and it must be looked forward to with an anxious longing which free laborers can have no conception of. But this year, it would seem, from the notices we have seen in the Southern papers, that the slaves have been denied this customary Christmas holiday, because their masters have been alarmed at the reported insurrections, and were fearful of the poor darkies availing themselves of a day's freedom from toil to attempt a general rising or a general stampede. It is difficult for the people of the North to properly understand the feelings of the slaveholders towards their property, or to commiserate sufficiently the embarrassments and troubles which the masters endure in managing their negroes. What between the fear of their running away, and the apprehension of being murdered by them, the slaveholder must lead anything but a quiet or happy life in the midst of their negroes. If the masters were afraid to allow their slaves the usual holiday on Christmas, they must have been perplexed themselves to properly enjoy the holiday season. Of the two we are not so sure that the slaveowner is more entitled to our pity than the slave.

**Slave Stampedes on the Southern Borderlands**  
National Park Service Network to Freedom / House Divided Project at Dickinson College