

Activity 1 Assessment

This is an assessment of the student's ability to analyze Lunsford Lane's narrative for features of enslaved entrepreneurship.

1. Match the words (number) with the correct definition below (letter).

- 1) *Entrepreneurship* (b)
- 2) *"To make a way out of no way"* (c)
- 3) *Unique opportunity* (a)
- 4) *Self-hiring* (d)

2. Answer the questions with a short answer of one or two sentences after closely reading this excerpt Lane's narrative including the footnote that Lane wrote (see asterisk).

"My master died; and his widow, by the will, became sole executrix of his property. To the surprise of all, the bank of which he had been cashier presented a claim against the estate for forty thousand dollars. By a compromise, this sum was reduced to twenty thousand dollars; and my mistress, to meet the amount, sold some of her slaves, and hired out others. I hired my time of her,* for which I paid her a price varying from one hundred dollars to one hundred and twenty dollars per year. This was a privilege which comparatively few slaves at the South enjoy; and in this I felt truly blessed."

* It is contrary to the laws of the State, for a slave to have command of his own time in this way, but in Raleigh it is sometimes winked at. I knew one slave—man who was doing well for himself, taken up by the public authorities and hired out for the public good, three times in succession for this offence. The time of hiring in such a case is one year. The master is subject to a fine. But generally as I have said, if the slave is orderly and appears to be making nothing, neither he nor the master is interfered with.

- 1) *What does Lane mean by the expression "to have command of his own time" in the footnote?*

Answer: Lane is referring to being able to "hire his own time" or find work and get paid directly, rather than getting hired out by his master.

- 2) *How much money does Lane pay his mistress each year?*

Answer: \$100- \$120 per year.

- 3) *Was there a specific amount of money that Lunsford Lane could keep when self-hiring?*

Answer: No. There 's no limit on what Lane can keep.

- 4) *Why does Lane say it is important that the slave who's hired out "appears to be making nothing"?*

Answer: According to Lane, as long as a slave who was hiring his own time doesn't appear to be making money and improving his status, it doesn't threaten whites and their status so they don't care. But if the enslaved person acts like a "free business person" who's having financial success,

that draws too much attention, threatens the white person, and results in the enslaved entrepreneur losing the business.

3. Read the passage below and answer the question that follows:

"Almost every article of clothing worn either by my wife or children, especially every article of much value, I had to purchase; while the food he furnished the family amounted to less than a meal a day, and that of the coarser kind. I have no remembrance that he ever gave us a blanket or any other article of bedding, although it is considered a rule at the South that the master shall furnish each of his slaves with one blanket a year. So that, both as to food and clothing, I had in fact to support both my wife and the children, while he claimed them as his property, and received all their labor... So that by the expense of providing for my wife and children, all the money I had earned and could earn by my night labor was consumed, till I found myself reduced to five dollars, and this I lost one day in going to the plantation. My light of hope now went out"

Why did it matter so much to Lane that his master cover the costs of food, clothing and bedding for his wife and children?

Answer: Lane couldn't "get ahead" financially because he had to pay for these living costs that are normally paid by the slave owner; paying these costs cut into Lane's earnings and his ability to purchase his family's freedom; it also affected his ability to invest money back into this business in order to sustain it.

4. In a few sentences explain the differences between "self hiring" and being "being hired out."

Answer: In self-hiring the slave is allowed to operate as an independent contractor or business person: the slave finds customers, negotiates the terms of the contract, does the work and gets paid directly. From their earnings the slave pays their Master a rent each month or at specific time intervals. In "hiring out" the Master finds the slave work; draws up the contract; and collects the earnings, sometimes paying the slave a small portion of the earnings.

5. According to the Harvard Business School, entrepreneurship is "pursuit of opportunity beyond resources controlled." Which of the follow statements reflects or supports this definition?

Answer: Only these two statements support the idea of "pursuit of opportunity beyond resources controlled." 1) Self-hired slaves who started up their own independently owned business ventures with little to no capital and 2) People who grow up poor are experienced with "making do" with few or no resources and therefore are accustomed to being resource deprived and "making do."

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