

## Discussion Guide to Review the Excerpts

Each group reads their assigned excerpt and discusses how it relates to one or more of the “Key Features of Enslaved Entrepreneurship” using the handout of the same name.

### 1) Early Experiences Making Money

This excerpt illustrates the feature of pursuit, or the dedicated quest for acquiring money, because Lane discovers that by continually working he can acquire more and more money. He says he persevered until he saved twenty dollars and that “plans for money-making took the principal possession of my thoughts.” This excerpt also exemplifies self-agency because Lane demonstrated to himself that he had the power to affect his situation and in his own words said: “Now I began to think seriously of becoming able to buy myself.”

### 2) Becoming a Tobacconist

In describing the tobacco product that Lunsford Lane marketed, he says it “was different from any then or since employed. It had the double advantage of giving the tobacco a peculiarly pleasant flavor, and of enabling me to manufacture a good article out of a very indifferent material.” This relates to the concept of entrepreneurship in that the opportunity is *very novel*; in this case, it was Lane's father who was the innovator of the product, but Lane was instrumental in getting it to market. In addition to the flavorful tobacco that his father created, Lane came up with the further *innovation* of a pipe to smoke it; he said: “... it occurred to me that I might so construct a pipe as to cool the smoke in passing through it, and thus meet the wishes of those who are more fond of smoke than heat...These pipes I sold at ten cents apiece. In the early part of the night, I would sell my tobacco and pipes, and manufacture them in the latter part...”

### 3) Costs of a Family

In this excerpt Lane describes the urgency and stress he felt because of the difficulty of having to pay the costs of living for his wife and family i.e. their clothing, bedding, and some food out of the money he was earning. These costs are usually taken care of by the master but in Lane's case: “So that, both as to food and clothing, I had in fact to support both my wife and the children, while he (the Master, Benjamin Smith) claimed them as his property, and received all their labor.” In this passage Lane describes the tremendous pressure—both urgency and stress—he felt because he was not able to save money for the purchase of his family because so much of it was going toward their basic needs of food and clothing (normally provided by the slave master). Lane felt depressed due to his inability to earn enough money: “My light of hope now went out. My prop seemed to have given way from under me. Sunk in the very night or despair respecting my freedom, I discovered myself, as though I had never known it before, a husband, the father of two children, a family looking up to me for bread, and I a slave, penniless...” Yet a “rainbow” appeared in the midst of this stormy time when Lane's master died. Because of the need to pay back her husband's debts, Lane's mistress allowed him to self-hire. Or, in his own words, “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.” He explains in a footnote how this practice worked in Raleigh, NC:

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."

#### **4) Growing the Business**

What is truly entrepreneurial is how Lane "targeted a product that already exists to a new set of customers." This reflects the aspect of entrepreneurship which is part of the definition of opportunity in "Features of Enslaved Entrepreneurship." It is also quite novel that he refined the business model of scaling his operation while still a slave who had to be constantly "pretend" or camouflage that he was making money with his business operation: "During this time I had found it politic to go shabbily dressed, and to appear to be very poor, but to pay my mistress for my services promptly. I kept my money hid, never venturing to put out a penny, nor to let any body but my wife know that I was making any. The thousand dollars was what I supposed my mistress would ask for me, and so I determined now what I would do."

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