

The Journal of Peter Naries

By Jack Howard

My name is Peter Naries. This journal is for anyone who finds it. I'll retell to you the hardships that have happened to me. If life keeps treating me this way, and if I am forced to work in the fields with the rest of the slaves I will die. Before I was taken I was tall, with short hair and brown eyes. I was told I was very kind to others and that I had a great smile. I enjoyed helping mother around the house, but what I really wanted was to join father and the other men in the hunt. One day that all went away. I'll start with the beginning of the end of my true life.

It was a normal day to tell the truth. Then came reports of a raid. It was common that other tribes would come and steal people away but I never thought it would come to us. How wrong could I be. There was no time to run. Our village was so small there was not enough protection. They had guns; gifts from the whites for bringing them slaves. That was what they had come for. *Slaves*.

"Peter," I remember mother's whispers of hope, "do not speak and lie on the ground. Maybe they'll miss us if they can't see us." I did just as she said. I remember the ground being cold, and hard. I was so scared. Mother was wrong. Two men barged in. I remember father's braveness.

"Take me! Leave them!" Father cried.

"Fool!" The taller man spat as he hit father in the gut with the butt of his rifle.

“We’ll take all of you!” The short one yelled and did the same to father. He groaned but stood straight after a while. Mother and I followed. Later we all were bound together by the necks and were forced to walk for such a long time that the sun moved completely across the sky and then the moon. Some of us were too tired to walk for such a long time. If you fell and took too long to get up you were left for dead. Finally we reached our destination. It was a building they called the “factory.” To me it was a prison.

We stayed there 89 days. I still recall the words that they said when we were allowed to leave that place. “The fam’ly, are they all still alive?” A stubby man questioned.

“Good, we got us a buyer for ‘em,” another man said. They dragged us out. There were so many people in the factory. We were forced to walk past them. They were begging to be let out like us. If they knew what was ahead, they would want to stay there. Outside was like smelling a flower. We were led towards a dock with a ship that was larger than any other one I have ever seen. On the side was a word, *Justice*. We were led aboard with many others like us. Before we could go on we were bound by chains at our hands. Father, however was bound by his neck, wrists, ankles and to two other men. I remember seeing whites for the first time. They were speaking a language that I never heard before. It was like seeing a fierce animal. Surely the rumors about them being cannibals was true. Not long after we boarded we were brought below deck. The stench was terrible. I could hardly breath. We were crammed so tight that we couldn't stand or move without hitting someone. All you could hear was the sound of chains and tears. If we wanted to relieve ourselves there was no place to go. This made me want to go back to the

factory. What an insane notion. All I could do was sit. There was the sound of a man who coughed. Then my life changed.

Every so often we were allowed to go on deck and walk around. It was like drinking refreshing water on a hot day. But the men were not allowed to walk around. I could not understand what the whites were saying but they always kept close eyes on the men. Like they were savage dogs that might attack at any moment. But going on deck wasn't always a refreshing drink. Every day we had to "exercise" by jumping up and down for a long time. If you couldn't keep up you would be whipped. One day that was father. I remember having to watch his punishment. The next day in the hold there were at least 4 people. One of them father. That day a white came down and took 5 men and father who he heard coughing on deck. Only one returned. He came back with the most horrific story. The other five men were considered dangerous to the "cargo" and tossed off the side of the ship. Father was dead. The food we had was just as bad. We were only occasionally fed meat. If anyone got riled up, they would throw bread at us like dogs to settle us down. At times I wish I could join father.

When we reached shore, I was taken to a slave market and pushed atop a stone where people shook their money at me. I had no idea what was going on until it was too late. Mother and I were purchased separately. From there I was taken to be a house slave. Ever since I have been treated like garbage. Even to use the privy I have to ask permission, and still they might say no. Therefore today I will reunite myself with my father. I write this in my master's study, with his pen and his stationary. When my master comes into his study he will find me hanging by a

rope. Please, whoever finds this, do not throw it away. Keep it. And tell others my story so that my story is heard. *Goodbye.*