

**MICROFILM 1903, ROLL 103**

**Frame: NARA 0541 (Ancestry 12502)**

Louisa Court House Va  
April 19, 1866

Watt Johnson (cold)

You are hereby requested to appear before me at this place on Monday next at 11 o'clock

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**Frame: NARA 0542 (Ancestry 12503)**

April 23, 1866

\_\_\_\_ Ben F. Trice

You are hereby required to forward \_\_\_\_ with information in regard to the binding out of five children of one Watt Johnson a Freedman by a woman named Nancy Roberts

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**Frame: NARA 0569 (Ancestry 12530)**

October 2, 1866

Watson Johnson, Carpenter  
Through Dr Philip B. Pendleton

You are hereby requested to appear before me at my office Monday the 8 \_\_\_\_ to answer to a charge made against you by Ms Clara L Garland in behalf of your wife, Nancy. If you fail to appear I shall have you arrested and the matter turned over to court.

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**Frame: NARA 0606**

Bureau R. F. and A.L.  
Off. A.S.A.C. Orange and Louisa Cos Va  
Gordonsville May 1 1867

Benj. F. Trice  
Tolersville Louisa Co. Va

Sir:

Application is made to this officer in behalf of Nancy Minor (colored) for her child said to be living with you. Please let me know whether the child is bound to you and when and by whom if so.

Yours Respectfully

M.S. Hopkins

\_\_\_\_ Maj. \_\_\_\_\_

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**Frame: NARA 0609**

Bureau R. F. and A.L.  
Off. A.S.A.C. 1 DW 4 S. Dist. Va  
Gordonsville May 22, 1867

Benj. F. Trice  
Tolersville Va

Sir:

I have received no reply to my letter to you of the \_\_\_\_\_ in regard to Nancy Minor's child living with you. I must have an answer and \_\_\_\_\_ by what authority you are holding the child or I shall be compelled to make you the trouble of being brought here to answer in person. If you have not proper and lawful indentures of apprenticeship you will incur a liability in keeping the child longer away from its mother. I must know about the matter without further delay.

Respectfully yours  
M.S. Hopkins  
\_\_\_\_ Maj. \_\_\_\_

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**Frame: NARA 0611**

Bureau R. F. and A.L.  
Off. A.S.A.C. 1 Dist. 4 S.D. Va  
Gordonsville May 28, 1867

Benj. F. Trice Esq.  
Tolersville Va

Sir:

I have received yours enclosing your contract. It is not in any respect a lawful or binding indenture. Its terms are not what is required by the statute of \_\_\_\_\_ and it is not stamped. You are liable to a heavy fine for failure to \_\_\_\_\_ it in compliance with the U.S. Re \_\_. \_\_\_\_\_. Please deliver the child to its mother at once and avoid difficulty. I enclose the contract.

Very Respectfully  
M.S. Hopkins  
\_\_\_\_ Maj. \_\_\_\_

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**MICROFILM 1903, ROLL 104**

**Frame: NARA 55-56**

To the Provost Marshall Louisa C House

Dear Sir

I write in behalf of suffering humanity Watson Johnson took Nancy (formally a servant of mine) to wife about 13 or 14 years ago, he took her under the form that was then used with the coloured people, brought a note from his master & obtained my consent etc., etc. After Lee's surrender he took another wife, Nancy his first has five children he has taken her two boys and bound them out to untie they are one and twenty, one of them is 10 years old and the other only 7 years old the oldest girl is about 12 years old he hired out and Nancy is now wandering about with two little children (one of them just one year and the other three years) without food of any kind and she very infirmed threatened with parallaxis occasionally loosing the use of one hand and her mind very much impaired at times if you can please help the poor sufferer in some way, if she do not get assistance from some quarter she and her little ones must die, Waston Johnson has a good trade and is making I am told one dollar per day at this time

Very Respectfully,  
Clara L Garland

September 25<sup>th</sup> - 66

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**Frame: NARA 64**

To Provost Marshall Louisa C House  
Sept 28<sup>th</sup> - 66

Dear Sir

Your favor is just and as regards your request to let you know where to find Watson Johnson I cannot write very definately (sic) he is a carpenter by trade and has I am told a job of worth at this time at Dr Phillip B Pendleton's not far from Tolersville and hear of him very often at Fredericks Hall depot and the woman that he has taken for another wife lives near Tolersville, I expect that he might be found at one of the three places

Very Respectfully,  
Clara L Garland

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**Frame: NARA 0228-0230**

Fredericks Hall Louisa County  
April 24 1867

Maj Marcus S Hopkins  
Dear Sir

Your favor of 19<sup>th</sup> inst was received yesterday, we are much grateful that you design looking into poor Nancy Minor's case, it is indeed a lamentable one when she has hope of getting her children she goes to work and is cheerful, but at times she gets heartless of ever getting them and then she is a real maniac, her oldest son called Minor is bound to Benjamin F Trice living in the county (Louisa) or 7 miles from Tolersville on the Central R Road, the other son called Lucian is bound to William Keeseer who lives very near Benjamin F Trice's, I wrote you all that I knew about the binding of these children, Nancy and he family were living 10 miles from us when they were bound she only knows that they were bound until they become of age but on what other terms she is entirely ignorant I rather suppose that the facts could be obtained by referring to the records kept by the Provost Marshalls at the Louisa C House. When I was there last fall Capt Roth would turn to different portions and read to me how and what Watson Johnson had had negotiated there, but I did not think to ask him about the binding of them at the time, I was detaining him from other business and did not stay more than half an hour, while I was there Mr Reuben Davis one of our magistrates and also our Representative in the Legislature came in and Capt Roth laid the case before him, he said that Watson Johnson had been to him and represented that Nancy did not answer his purposes as a wife and that he (Mr Davis) had given him leave to take another woman a wife, I remarked to Mr Davis that I thought when a man took a wife that he took her for better for worse, to which Mr David made no reply, but Capt Roth replied that Nancy's was an unlawful marriage, which was the very thing we wanted admitted, for of course the children were illegitimate and belonged the mother and Wat had no right to bind them. I have heard that after I went to Nancy to the C House that Wat sent and tried to get the children but the parties refused to let them go and threatened Wat that they would show the instrument of writing, with the terms of which Wat had not complied, but what that instrument of writ contains Nancy and none of her friends are allowed the privilage (sic) of seeing, she was naturally ignorant and her mind thrown off its balance from Wat's cruel treatment, a victim for any unprincipled person to prey on time would fail me to tell you of Wat's treatment to her how he beat her and threatened her life would take clothing and shoats etc. that I had giving her and sell to pay his debts and then say that he had to support Nancy and the children altogether and was obliged to bind out the children I was told by a person on the farm as soon as the provisions that Nancy had give out he took himself off and got another wife and furnished nothing for the children only when he was ordered to do so by the Pro Marshalls, Nancy would complain and he would be arrested he would make a statement to suit himself and he would have his orders but what they were Nancy did not know only that he would give her a little provision after being earned to the C House I talked with a man on the farm and told him that he ought to befriend Nancy he said that he was afraid of Wat that he might burn him up before Nancy came to live here she came to one in her distress we hire her brother and I proposed to him to take Nancy in our buggie and carry her to the C House he objected fearing that Wat would do him some private injury and prevailed with another man to carry her and very quickly and inquiry came from Wat to know who carried Nancy to the C House I \_\_\_ thing help for Nancy and stating her grievances to the P Marshall I had my others from one of Wat's parts to keep my pen ink and paper to myself, After Nancy came to live here she went to the C House at what time Wat and the children were there and I suppose that Wat had the matter of binding at that time but Nancy told me that the P Marshall told her that she should have her children \_\_\_ gave her a piece of writing and told her to give it to me or her brother to keep for her she could not find it after she got home the woman who went with her supposes that Wat got it from her however we are not certain of that.

In conclusion I will say to you if you will get Nancy's children you will have our lasting gratitude and we will assist Nancy in caring for them she has a comfortable house here with two rooms where the children can stay until she can put them out to business, Again I will say to you that it is from disinterested motivates regards myself that I make the request for these children but \_\_\_ their mother and when they were ours we treated them tenderly fed and clothed them well I had the best \_\_\_ for them when sick and we know too well now into what hands they have fallen and how they will be treated

When the Confederacy went up myself and sisters owned jointly upwards of 70 negroes We never believed in slavery, always thought it wrong and begged ours to accept of their freedom but we could not free them and let them remain in the State and they would not leave us to go to another State altho (sic) we promised to buy them homes and provisions for the first year, We had an income (besides what was made on our farms) of \$4000 and black and white lived luxuriously until the war broke out and then after the first two years we all had to live as we could We feel a deep interest for these \_\_\_\_\_ of the freedmen and assist them all we can but our stores are gone up and our houses burnt in Richmond and \_\_\_\_\_ cannot do for them as we could wish, in slavery times ours were called spoilt negroes but now they are sought after as the best laborers about here, We taught them to work from principles and not from fear and they have not forgotten it.

With great respect I again beg for poor Nancy's children praying that our heavenly Father will grant the \_\_\_\_\_ of the unfortunate

Clara L Garland

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**Frame: NARA 0237-0239**

Frederick's Hall Louisa County  
April 15 67

To Provost Marshall Louisa C House  
Dear Sir

The cause of suffering humanity compels me to write you in behalf of a coloured woman who formally belonged to me she is the greatest victim of cruelty, injustice and oppression that has come under my knowledge since the Confederacy went up her name is Nancy Miner Watson Johnson took her for a wife some 14 or 15 years ago he belonged to Andrew Nelson and took Nancy in the usual way for slaves brought a note from his master giving his consent and obtaining mine etc. and were living together as man and wife when the Confederacy went up, Nancy and two other women and their children lived at a farm of ours about 10 miles from where we lived and the women came down with a petition from their husbands to let them remain at the farm and their husband with them I gave my consent and loaned them the teams plantation utensils cows etc, etc and told them that they might have all that they could make, a few weeks after I was at the farm and talk with Watson Johnson and the others there, all seem pleased with the arrangements of being with their families but in the fall Watson took himself and got another wife and when Nancy pressed on him for a support for her children (she has five) he took the oldest from her the oldest a girl 11 years old he hired out for the year two next oldest were boys one 9 and the other 7 years old he bound out until they are of age one to Benjamin F Trice and the other to William Keeseer, the first Nancy knew about it the white men came and took the children, in hers and the childrens great distress she broke up and followed her children to Ben Trice and worked there for some months for only her food, but being pressed on with work more than she had been used to she left and went to her old home but by this time she had little or nothing to eat and withall is threatened with paralasiss at times lossing the use of one of her hands and her mind at times very much impaired she went wandering about the neighborhood with two little children one three years old and the other one year old getting a little bread for them as she could get a little work to do and sometimes without anything to eat for herself or children and brother who lived with us heard of her situation he gave her a home in his family last fall but he has a large family of his own and could not support her and her children and ont room enough either so I gave her a room to live in and she and her two little children had to live as they can mostly on charity,

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she is a hard working creature when she is composed but since her children have been torn from her she is seldom herself, when Watt first left her she would go to the Provost Marshalls and they would order him to support the children he then had it registered at Louisa C House the he had left her for seven years and proved it by witnesses, that being the age of the youngest children that he bound but disowning the two youngest to keep from supporting them that \_\_\_\_\_ can be proved false by hundreds of witnesses, Winter before last the Virginia Legislature passed a law that all the coloured people that were living as man and wife such a day in February was considered lawfully married of course they were not Watt had left Nancy at that time and of course their children were in law illegitimate and belonged to Nancy and Watt had no right to bind them but since it is found out that Nancy only had the power to bind it is asserted that she signed the \_\_\_\_\_ writing binding and can be proven well agreeable to what has already been proven and put on record about the matter that \_\_\_\_\_ was false they may prove another falsity but Nancy bitterly deny's putting her hand to any paper and it was not known when Watt bound the children that it was no way for Nancy to have a voice in it was through Watt had all the power. One of the party asks what does Nancy want with her children; I would ask in reply what does any mother want with their children, Nancy is a mother and an injured mother, if a white mother's children were torn from her at that tender age the community would be in arms at the outrage but as poor Nancy has a dark skin it passes off well with the parties concerning but I trust that you will take a better view of the case and have justice done the poor afflicted creature all she asks for is her children which she is not allowed to see now under penalty of being shot this would be considered cruel for a white mother but Nancy is a colored mother and must have no feelings of \_\_\_\_\_ (the others?) in the estimation of the parties concerned if she has those children in a few years the boys would hire for enough to support her and the other ones moreover I think she would be composed enough to work herself if she had them I went with her to the Provost Marshall last fall but he was about to leave and advised to carry the case into Court but you now the matters have changed since then and you have it in your power to see justice come her, I recommend her to your compassion but for the assistance that we give her she would be cast a homeless wanderer with mind impaired two infant children (girls) without food on an unfriendly world last Christmast she brought her daughter home with her and I assisted her hiring her out for \$10 but she was in need of clothing the lady who hired her proposed for part her hire to be spent in clothing to which Nancy consented so there will be little of the hire comeing (sic) to Nancy and she at this time has for herself and her two infants only what she gets on charity she is at this time in my corn house shelling a bushel of corn for bread for herself and children of course We try and not let her suffer for the real necessaries of life but how long we will be able to assist her or how long we shall live to do it is uncertain and then to think of the injustice of the matter A mother in such destitute condition and her only boys that she has (forced/parted) from put in the worst bond of slavery, driven to the extent of their abilities to make money for men who men who has no claim on them only what they choose to take by force Please excuse this intrusion I write from disinterest motives as regard myself but I have promised Nancy that I would do all that I can to get her children for her and she and I both to you to \_\_\_\_\_ please help the poor creature

Very respectfully  
Clara L Garland

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**Frame: NARA 291-292**

Fredericks Hall Louisa County  
May 17<sup>th</sup> – 62

Maj Hopkins  
Dear Sir

I am sorry again to intrude on your kindness but poor Nannie Miner's case seems to call for it, she was greatly elated when Henry Watson came from Court and told her that you said that she was to have her children he also said that he heard you tell Ben Trice to send the children to her which he has not done, and I am very confident will not unless he is forced to do so, we would not trouble you to get the children to Nannie if we could do it ourselves with safety, but Trice has repeatedly threatened to shoot Nannie and if we were to send any one with her there would be danger of a mob, Ben Trice is a drinking character and he lives near a grocery (sic) where is generally a gathering of black and white

There are I think deep laid plans yet to keep those children from their mother. Watt is an artful fellow and has Ben Trice to assist him in his plans his petitioning you for the children is on of the plans thinking that you would be more apt to give him the children than a white man, a friend of the party was here last Saturday and in speaking of the case he said to me if he had been in my place that he would not have applied to a Yankee instead of our own people to befriend me, I told him that I applied to those in authority and that I thought in the present state of our country Military rule was indispensable that negroes could not get justice from the white people without it, he called the next evening I was not at home but he told my sister that Nannies case was not between black and white that it was all colored that it was Watt that was concerned in it and not Trice and Keeseer and left having to ride several trains in the night (we live 12 or 14 miles from Trice's) we thought to give the information that he had gathered from us false advice before Court he is an intelegant (sic) man and a worn (?) advocate for slavery.

But I shall weary you poor Nannie is suffering intense anxiety about her children I trust that you will get them to her and have the mothers gratitude and blessing and your reward in high heaven

Most respectfully  
Clara L Garland

Please excuse my frequent importunities I am embolden to do so by thinking after so much blood being spilt to put down the institution of slavery that an Officer of the United States will not suffer it to exist in the persons of the poor little children who were forcibly torn from their mother and who is almost beside herself about it, when she is expecting to hear from you her every look bespeaks the mother

CLG

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**Frame: NARA 0297 (3 slides)**

Fredericks Hall Louisa County  
May 23<sup>rd</sup> - 67

Maj Hopkins  
Dear Sir

At poor Nannie Miner's urgent request I again trespass on your time and patience, I wrote you last week that Nannie's children would not be given to her unless the men were forced to give them up, she has been quite sick since I wrote and thinking that her intense anxiety about those children had much to do with her sickness, when she got better and got her brother (Henry Watson) to go with her and ask those men for her children which was positively refused she asked where her children were she was told that they were in the house but she was not allowed to go in to see them nor they to come out to see her Henry

reminded him Trice that you told him at Court to let Nannie have her children to which he replied that Nannie would not get her children and that he would take Maj Hopkins through next Court to see if he could get them, we do not know what his \_\_\_\_\_ was but doubtless more villainous plan to retain those children from their mother, who is in an agonizing state of mind which is affecting her health seriously she is almost heartless of ever getting those children and I fear too that owing to the press of business that you might overlook her case, but I hope for the sake of humanity that you have no other case so distressing, We are feeling deeply besides witnessing the mother's agony, we know too well in whose hands the poor children have fallen, Maj Hopkins you do not know the horrors of slavery as we do, we were raised in the midst of it, but I will ask you in all candor, when men have robbed a mother by brute force of her infant children and hold on to them in spite of law and order what kind of treatment can be expected for their ill gotten prey in the persons of those poor children? I would sooner expect mercy for a lamb in a Lion's paw. I know men who intended getting labor by getting colored children bound to them but after the General Assembly passed the law that those children should be educated and have a trade given them.

Our law abiding men abandoned the idea of having children bound to them thinking that it would not pay, but I guess that Trice and Keeseer have no such scruples and have not the first idea of educating those children for they are lawless men therefore dear Maj Hopkins attend to the case, it will be deplorable indeed unless you do take the children from those men, only think of the cruelty a mother right at her children and not allowed to speak to each other Major your mission here is to put down such barbarity cannot you exert your authority in this instance and restore those children to their mother, Please let us hear from you as poor Nannie is suffering greatly in mind about her children

Most Respectfully  
Clara L Garland

Nannie says that Ben Trice asked if she had an order for the children now what order was necessary when you had told him to give the children to their mother and she there to retrieve them doubtless it was an artifice to get the childrens labor to the last hour by an order from you he might give in

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**Frame: NARA 329-330**

Frederick's Hall  
June 4<sup>th</sup> -67

Maj Hopkins  
Dear Sir

Altho I have the trespassed so much on your time and patience I feel an irresistible desire to tender to you our grateful acknowledgements for your great kindness in restoring those little children to their mother, Nannie sends many thanks and blessing and could you see the happy faces of the mother and children it would be some compensation to your benevolent heart for your trouble about them but I trust that you will receive your reward from a Higher Power The child that Keeseer had was delivered to Nannie yesterday evening by a colored man saying Keeseer was in a hurry to get him off his hands, Nannie had taken possession of the one that Trice had some 9 or 10 days previous, Sunday morning before last Nannie was called on to attend her sister's funeral in the neighborhood of Trice and Mrs Trice (not knowing that Nannie was so near) on that Sabbath morning gave the little boy a tin bucket with orders to go and gather strawberries for her in the old fields and Nannie being told his whereabouts went and

brought him home with her right away not waiting to attend the burial of her sister for fear of Trice some boys that went with Nannie got a head of her and told the little boy that his mother was coming to take him home he cried and said that Trice had told him that if he went to his mother that he would send the Yankees after him he ran but the boys soon captured him and by the time he got here he was very happy and said that he could not go to Trice's any more.

Again Please receive the tribute of grateful hearts who would be pleased to extend to you the hospitalities of our humble home

With much esteem your obliged and grateful friend

C L Garland

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**Frame: NARA 523-525 (Ancestry 15761-15763)**

*Division of land and signing; too difficult to transcribe on microfilm*

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**Frame: NARA 1006-1007 (Ancestry 16163-16164)**

April 25 1866

To the Officer in command of the Freedmans Bureau

This is to certify that Nannie was my property and that Watson Johnson about 12 or 13 years since took her for a wife agreeably to the forms then used for coloured persons he brought a note from his master giving his consent and obtained my consent etc. Nannie lived on my farm about 10 miles from where I live, but I was there several week after Gen Lee's surrender and Watson was there I told him and the other coloured ones at the place that they might cultivate the farm and have all that they made that year and the next year also, that I wanted to put them in a way to make a living, I talked with Watson about making a living for his family etc. and he never intimated to me that he intended leaving Nannie and from I heard he made that his home when he was not working at his trade and \_\_\_\_\_ piece of ground and planted in corn last year Nannie is a poor afflicted creature she is threatened with paralysis, at times loosing the use of one of her hands and her mind is also impaired, she and her children are real objects of charity, tho, Watson has a good trade and could support them if he would, but I am very confidant that he will not do it unless he is made to it, Owing to my necessities the farm on which Nannie lives is for sale possession to be given the first day next January and then Nannie will be homeless and without any means of support, Please do what you can for her and the poor children they will suffer for the necessaries of life

Very Respectfully,

Clara L Garland

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